

Windows and Mirrors

Curriculum that Honors All Learners

Waterford.org is committed to **positively representing all learners in our content** and to **creating high-quality instruction that leads to successful outcomes for all learners.**

We strive to **depict people and cultures respectfully.** This means we include authentic context, avoid expressing a moral stance or view, are factual, and portray a variety of family structures, ages, races, genders, abilities, and socioeconomic statuses. Our **content is research-based,** following guidelines and recommendations for culturally responsive teaching practices.

This document will demonstrate how our curriculum provides children with mirrors to see themselves and windows to learn about others. We will also discuss how we create inviting family and educator resources and our process for finding and filling gaps in representation.

[Curriculum needs] to function both as window and as mirror, in order to reflect and reveal most accurately both a multicultural world and the student herself or himself. If the student is understood as occupying a dwelling of self, education needs to enable the student to look through window frames in order to see the realities of others and into mirrors in order to see her/his own reality reflected.*

–Emily Seed

“Curriculum As Window and Mirror”



Children See Themselves and Learn About Others

Our goal is that children will see themselves positively reflected in our curriculum. We also want to help children expand their knowledge of the world by allowing them to see life from someone else’s point of view. Our books and activities **include stories, images, and narration that reflect a variety of ethnicities, cultural traditions, abilities, and family structures,** as shown in the examples on the following page.

*Seed, Emily. “Curriculum As Window and Mirror.” *Social Science Record*, Fall (1996).



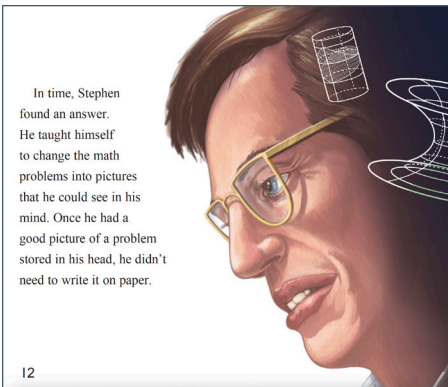
A grandmother and granddaughter make jewelry and practice counting in *Navajo Beads*.



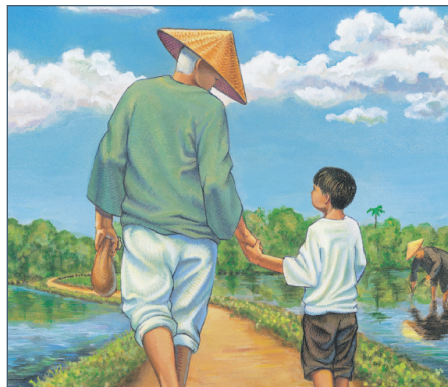
I Can't Wait tells the story of a six-year-old boy who can't wait to grow up. Or can he?



Violeta loves to read and is encouraged by several mentors to use reading to overcome her shyness.



Stephen Hawking discovered amazing things about the universe by using mental pictures to solve complex problems.



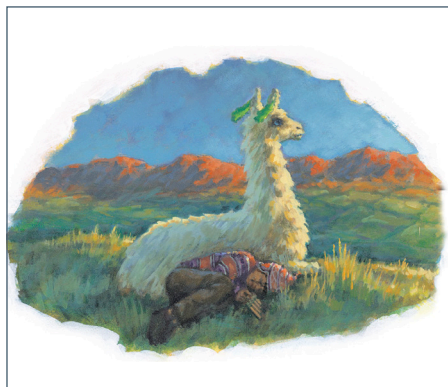
Duc Tho Le gets a meaningful birthday present from his grandfather.



Jane Goodall began observing and caring for animals and the natural world as a child.



Bessie Coleman persevered and overcame prejudice to achieve her goal to fly planes.



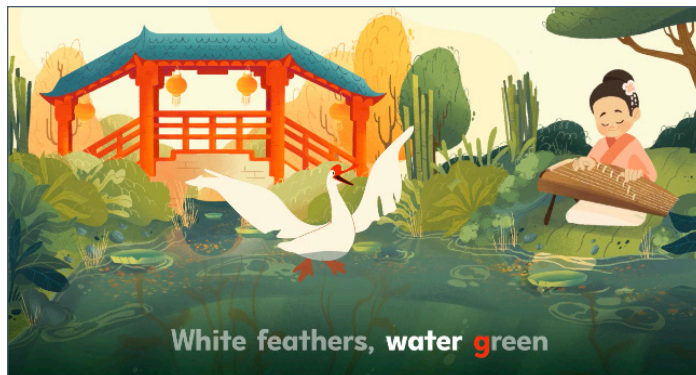
Oro the Llama helps Lorenzo in a time of crisis.



Mai-Li has a gecko that lives in her room.

Children Explore Cultural Traditions

Sing Around the World songs—an important series in our curriculum—teach letter recognition while introducing children to music from 26 cultural traditions around the globe. There is one song for each letter of the alphabet. The songs are sung both in English and their language of origin. Care was taken to **ensure that all the cultures highlighted in the songs are authentically and beautifully represented.**



“The Goose” is a traditional Chinese song about a girl playing the guzheng near the water. She watches a goose that seems to sing and dance along. The garden and bridge reflect traditional Chinese design and colors.



“Little Chicks” is a Lebanese song about little chicks and their mother having fun on a sunny day. The song is set under a cypress tree, which is native to Lebanon.



“Colors, Colors” is set in a Mexican village similar to Chiapas or Guanajuato. A children’s Mariachi band sings as the colors become more vibrant.



“Elephant Guest” is a Hindi children’s rhyme about a girl who invites an elephant into her home to eat some *halwa poori* (pudding and sweet cakes). Hindi instruments, such as the harmonium, dhol, khanjani, and tabla accompany this song.

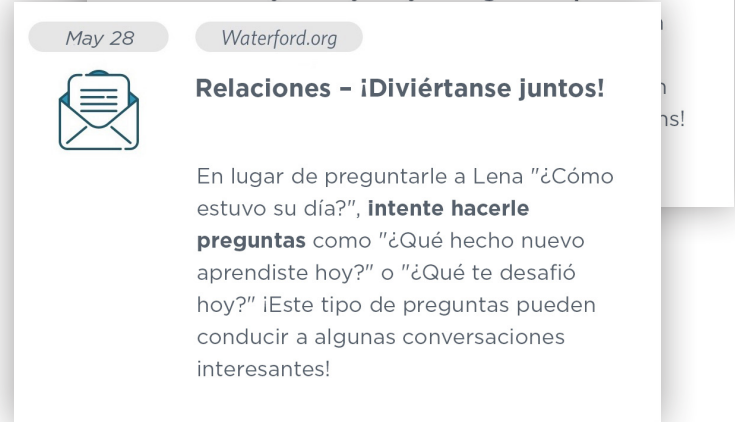
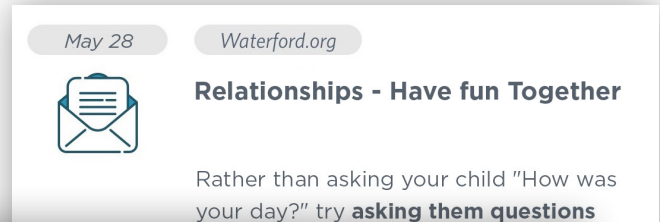


“A Bird Sang in the Trees” is a Norwegian song about a hiker walking on a mountain path. The path is lined with Norway spruces and bergfrue flowers.

Inviting Family and Educator Resources

Waterford values not only the children we serve but the families, caregivers, and educators who surround them. With this in mind, our family and educator resources **suit different life experiences, cultures, and backgrounds, and many resources include mindset skills.**

Most of our resources are available in English and Spanish. We provide educators with ideas to support children learning English as a new language, and we encourage families to continue speaking their native language to support their child's biliteracy.



Families can sign up to receive messages in Spanish or English. These short messages include simple activities families can do together.

Why is it important to not judge people before you get to know them?

1. FIND YOUR APPLE (30 MINUTES)

Give one apple to each student. Ask the class to "get to know your apple." Students should examine their apples—smell them, touch them, and roll them around. After a few minutes, collect the apples in a big basket, and ask the class to find their apples in the pile. Next, ask the students to describe how they recognized their apples. Then talk about how people come in different sizes, different shapes, different shades of color, different "dents and bruises."

After exploring these ideas, collect the apples again, but this time peel the apples before placing them in the basket. Then ask the students to again find their apple. When the class notices they are all the same, discuss how people, like apples, are often similar on the inside.

ELL Support: Offer some vocabulary words that students could use as descriptors of their apple with photos (for example, dents, bruises, scrape, decoloration, yellow, green, stem, etc.).

In this class activity for the book *Separate Is Never Equal*, the teacher helps children examine apples to learn about visible differences and underlying similarities.

Audits Help Identify and Address Gaps in Representation

Waterford conducts **in-depth review and analysis of our content** and continuously pushes to **ensure that all learners are represented**. We also gather data to measure student achievement across various demographic groups.

We designed a rubric to assess representation in our texts, activities, songs, illustrations, and narration. The rubric identifies gaps in representation and highlights where updates are needed.

Based on audit results and partner feedback, **we update content with an eye toward respectful, accurate, and authentic representation** of cultures, storylines, illustrations, and narration.

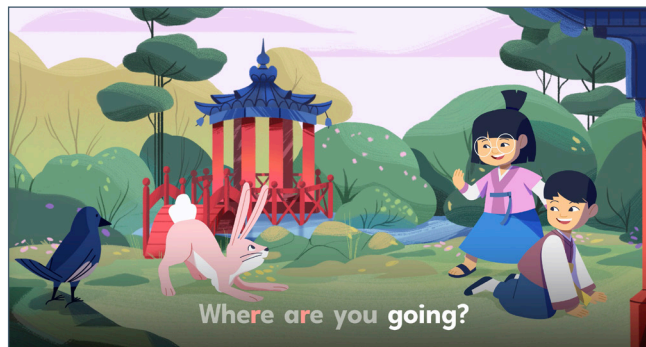
Representation in Text	Yes	No	Unclear	Not Applicable
A variety of ethnicities are portrayed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context provides details about the characters' culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If cultural details are present, they are represented in an affirming/respectful way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family structure represented includes a nuclear family with two parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family structure represented includes a non-nuclear family with a variety of parents or adults.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A central character is differently-abled.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A central character is able-bodied.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The central characters are portrayed in an affirming, realistic, and genuine way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Characters depicted as "good" characters reflect a variety of backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Characters include both females and males in leadership and/or non-traditional roles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As part of our book audit, the rubric assesses representation in the text.

BEFORE

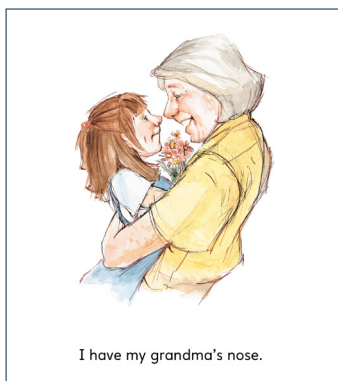


AFTER



During an audit, the Sing Around the World song "Mountain Rabbit" was identified as a priority update. External reviewers shared that the characters looked like paper dolls and their clothing was not appropriate for playing. In response, we updated the clothing, modernized the artistic design, and created a background that reflects the South Korean landscape. The target letter *r* is highlighted to ensure children can find the letter.

BEFORE

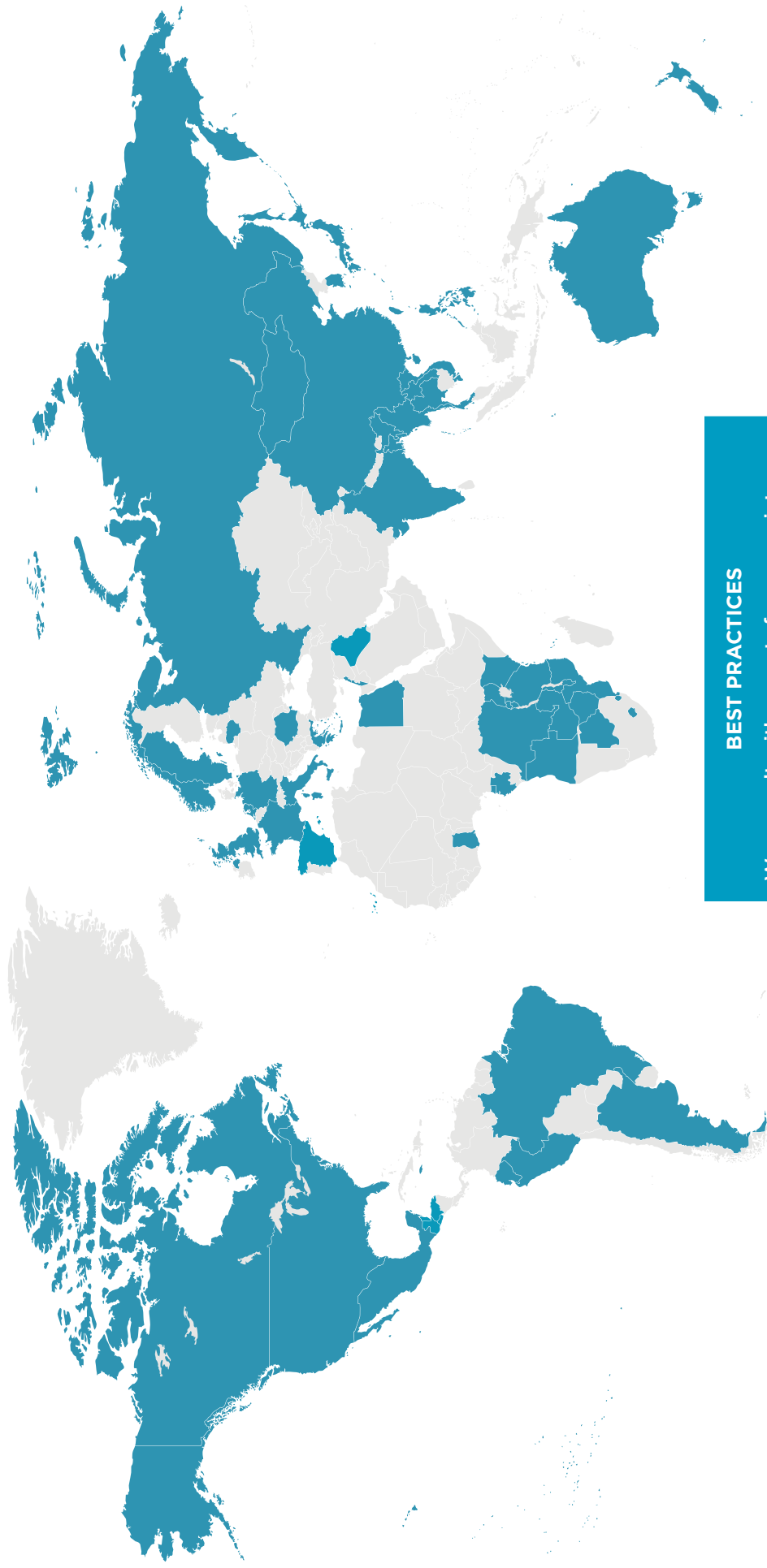


AFTER



The original version of *Mine* focused on genetic traits (noses, ears, etc.). In the new version, we include genetic and character traits to represent children who are adopted or children who share non-genetic traits with the important people in their lives. The family in the new version has multiple cultural backgrounds.

THE HIGHLIGHTED COUNTRIES ARE REPRESENTED IN WATERFORD CURRICULUM.



BEST PRACTICES

We consult with experts from a variety of cultures and countries for translations, creating new music, and reviewing books.

We aim to align the identities of our authors and illustrators with the subjects in our books.