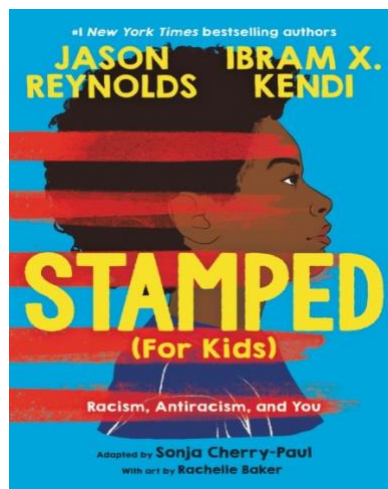


## Second Reaction: Antiracism Concepts Can Be Scaffolded for Young Children

Reynolds, Jason, and Ibram X Kendi. *Stamped (for Kids)*. Adapted by Sonja Cherry-Paul, Illustrated by Rachelle Baker. New York: Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2021. Print.

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*STAMPED (for kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You,* adapted by Sonja Cherry-Paul, Jason Reynolds, and Ibram X. Kendi, is a pointed but mindful approach to sharing the history of race in the United States. While the book is targeted for elementary-aged consumers, 6 years old to 10 years old, the younger students in elementary will need scaffolded support to engage with the material and content. However, it is possible, and developmentally appropriate.

*STAMPED (for kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You* can be made accessible and meaningful for all elementary students through highlighting sections of the text, developing

interactive anchor chart experiences, and guiding discussions focused on the imagery in the book.

Additionally, a fantastic addition to the “Stamped” series is *Antiracist Baby* by Ibram X. Kendi, illustrated by Ashley Lukashevsky. This picture book highlights the qualities of being an upstander through rhyming text and powerful words. Utilizing *Antiracist Baby*, in collaboration with *STAMPED (for kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You*, has the possibility to create students who are critical thinkers with strong vocabulary to support the voice of learning about antiracism. Furthermore, these two books intentionally share quotes to engage readers in collaborative discussion, art, and writing. While each of these books could be used solitarily, pairing the books to reach all elementary students, including Kindergarten through 2nd grade students, is a strategy I employed when engaging with young children.

Getting back specifically to *STAMPED (for kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You*, educators can pull out quotes and questions for collaborative discussion and learning. Specifically, structured discussions that focus on some of the questions and statements that are included in the text such as “Think Pair Share” or “Gallery Walk”. Utilizing these strategies not only engages students in discussions of antiracism, but also builds a positive culture of conversation within the classroom.

Now, you may be thinking? What quotes from *STAMPED (for kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You*, could be used for Kindergarten students? Here are some examples:

- *The choices you make, the words you use, the way you look at yourself, and those around you...they all matter.*
- *While people were working to justify slavery, there were people who fought against it.*
- *You are probably wondering...how do we stop this.*

In addition to conversations, students can engage with the quotes by drawing what they see in their “mind's-eye”. Similar to the benefits of spoken language (through interactive conversations), illustrations are also a great launching point for students to creatively share their thoughts and ideas. For example, words from the book you could ask young children to draw might include: power, famous, strong, important, antiracist, transform equity, and racism. Furthermore, *Antiracist Baby* offers a developmentally appropriate Picture Walk and Talk opportunity. Specifically, illustrations from the book could be displayed for students to observe

and write or speak a simple sentence about. What are the main points they see in the illustration or hear in the words?

While there are great learning opportunities in both of these books, there are also a fair number of warnings or critiques that can be found. Some critics state these books create too much exposure to complex topics, ideas, and images for children. For example, *STAMPED (for kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You*, discusses the violence of slavery, the brutality Black people experience at the hands of police, the Ku Klux Klan, and the killings of Emmett Till, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmad Arbery (not an exhaustive list). However, as a long time educator, I would argue that there are always ways to share complex and sad concepts in developmentally appropriate ways for young children, as already described -- pair *STAMPED (for kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You* with the book *Anti-racist Baby*. The reality is that we all need to get comfortable with getting uncomfortable to become upstanders. Even our youngest citizens must experience this to become a part of the solution.

### **About the Author**

**Lindsay Meeker** is a long-time early childhood educator who advocates for bilingual education beginning in the early years. She is currently a full time faculty member at Western Illinois University in the Education Department and as the Director of the Center for Best Practices in Early Childhood.