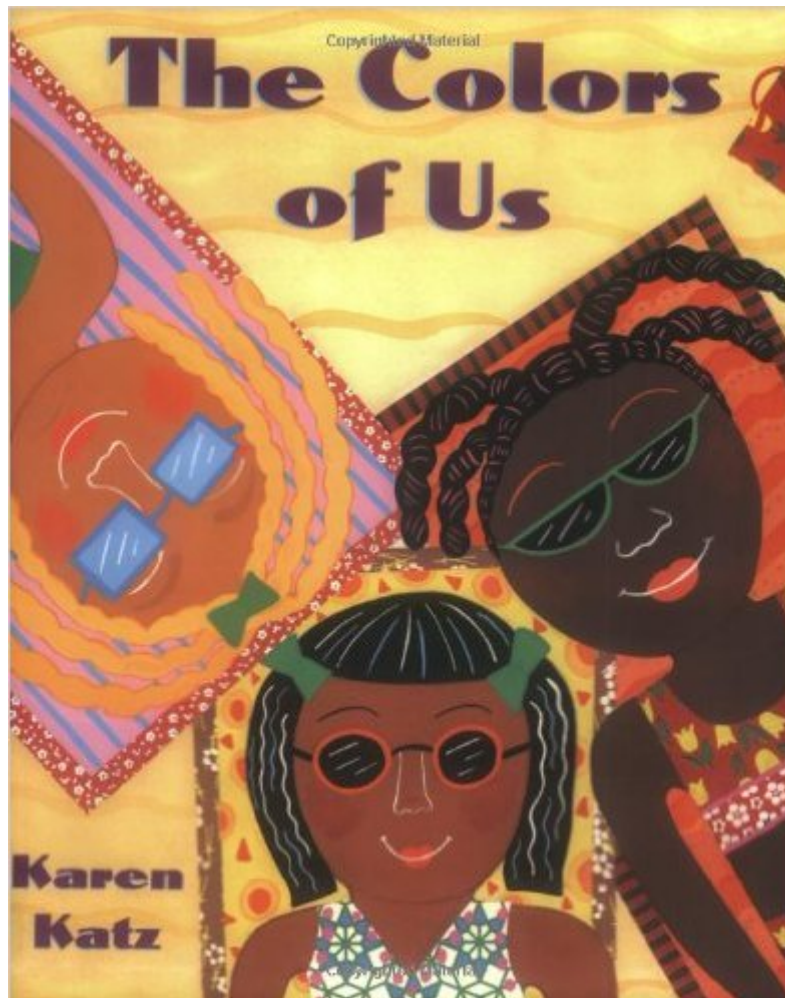


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# The Colors Of Us



## Synopsis

A positive and affirming look at skin color, from an artist's perspective. Seven-year-old Lena is going to paint a picture of herself. She wants to use brown paint for her skin. But when she and her mother take a walk through the neighborhood, Lena learns that brown comes in many different shades. Through the eyes of a little girl who begins to see her familiar world in a new way, this book celebrates the differences and similarities that connect all people. Karen Katz created this book for her daughter, Lena, whom she and her husband adopted from Guatemala six years ago.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 370L (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Square Fish; Reprint edition (October 1, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0805071636

ISBN-13: 978-0805071634

Product Dimensions: 7.8 x 0.1 x 9.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (104 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #8,667 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > United States](#) #59 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Values](#) #82 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Self-Esteem & Self-Respect](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

I was going along with this book until the stereotypes began to get more and more outrageous... the child's experience with a black person is her babysitter, with an Arab/Muslim is the man who sells spices; with an Italian is the Pizza maker.... OK as a black professional women whose child is at one of New York City's Independent schools I keenly felt the portrayal of the black woman in the story as a babysitter. Unfortunately this is the only interaction many white children have with women of color... the author should show some real sensitivity by trying to shatter rather than reinforce stereotypes. NO matter how you sugar coat it... it leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

We bought this book for our two children who, as two of a very small group of kids of any color in their classes, are often asked about their "differentness." The book did a great job of identifying different skin tones, likening them to very colorful (pun intended) descriptions of foods, and linking them to affable and memorable individual characters. My kids are clear that their immediate world is made up of different people who happen to have unique skin colors and that coloring is only one component of what makes these people who they are -- in that respect, this book helped us achieve our goals. Where the book failed (and here, it failed pretty big) is in some of the assigned stereotypical roles to several of the book's characters: "Mr. Pelligrino" (the pizza shop owner), "Candy" (the bronze and amber colored babysitter), and "Mr. Kashmir" (the turban wearing spice seller). The book isn't bad and the lack of character creativity challenged me to augment it with other books that do a better job at introducing issues of diversity while carefully avoiding stereotypes. I wouldn't, however, use it by itself to teach a kid (or kids) about similarities and differences. Several books that come to mind which help hammer home a more complete understanding of the issue of diversity are: *Whoever You Are* (Mem Fox); *We're Different, We're the Same* (Sesame Street); *All the Colors of Earth* (Sheila Hamanaka); *Courderoy* (Don Freeman); *It's OK To Be Different* (Todd Parr); and *Chugga Chugga Choo Choo* (Kevin Lewis). I wouldn't dissuade anyone from buying it but I would hope that it isn't used as an only tool to introduce issues of color and cultural differences. If your intention is to have a groovy book with colorful descriptions of people's skin tones, this book for you.

I am a Pre-K/K Teacher. Last school year a child in my class, who had many questions about skin color, instantly attached to this book and it remained a favorite all year long. This is an excellent book that explores the various hues of us in a format that is extremely appealing and inviting to children. It is a great spring board for discussions of color and race with young children. A must have for any early childhood library.

This is a wonderful book to introduce children to the concept of multiculturalism. I am white, my husband is Mexican and my daughters are dark like my husband. It is wonderful to see a book with a white mother and dark daughter, and it's wonderful to see all the different colored characters. My 4-year-old loves this book and I love reading her a story with a character she can relate to. I highly recommend it.

I understand and appreciate the intent here. However, vaguely cheerful affirmations that "yes,

people come in different colors, like food!" aren't likely to actually make any child more aware of diversity or accepting of it. Also, it's a little weird that in this "let's all accept each other!" book many of the other characters have jobs which are just a bit stereotypical of their origins. There are better choices for young children. If you want to speak just about diversity, I suggest you focus on having a broad library rather than the same old standbys (with mostly white characters) and a few Let's Be Friends books. It can be more difficult to get books with non-white protagonists, but it is not impossible. If you've been having trouble in your kid with actual bigotry, I suggest a book that discusses this head-on - a good picture book biography or a picture book historical fiction would be more useful.

I am an elementary school counselor and read this book to second graders. They love the comparisons of skin colors to foods, and it leaves everyone feeling good about the way they look. It is a strong multicultural book, but the presentation is very subtle, and not preachy.

Karen Katz has succeeded in presenting a colorful and creative book that describes the many beautiful shades of skin tone in our society. She teaches her daughter, Lena, that there are many shades of brown. They walk through their neighborhood, using color tones and food items to make tasteful distinctions. After Lena mixes her paint colors to match the subtle hues and paint each person, she exclaims, "Look Mom, the colors of us!" This has been a wonderful book for my 2 year old son to explore the differences in races as we await the adoption of our baby from China. He has memorized the skin color descriptions and has noticed people in our community/church whose skin matches them. This incredible book has become one of our favorites.

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