The Importance of Seeing Ourselves in Books

It helps to inspire and create an impact

Stories of other people's lives can impact our own by helping us better understand our world.
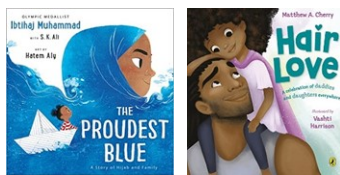
Seek out books about inspiring individuals who are reflective of your children.

Seeing how characters are portrayed and seeing themselves in these characters can develop positive self-perceptions of ourselves and who we can be.
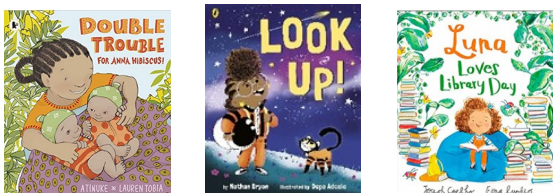
It allows for connections to be built

When children enjoy reading books with characters who look, sound, think like them, it helps them form connections to books on another level.

By seeing themselves in books, children are more likely to connect to the story, developing greater reading and comprehension skills, establishing a more in-depth affinity with reading.

The more children enjoy reading, and find real meaning in stories, the more they will want to read and come back to books.
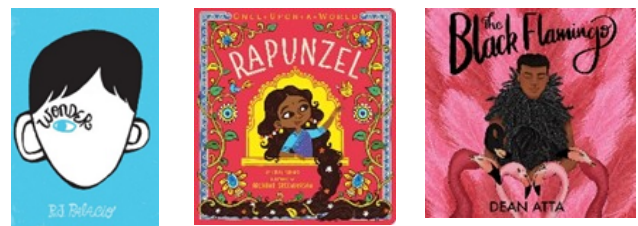
It provides a mirror to identity

Some books that children read should be mirror books. These are books with characters that look just like them: reflecting their lives and experiences as part of a larger human experience.

Children need to see other children just like themselves doing ordinary kid stuff like visiting the library, going to the pool, and playing in the park.

Highly relatable books allow children to identify with the characters. It's validating for children to meet a character in a story who has hair that resembles theirs or wears glasses just like they do.

Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation: acknowledging one's own worthiness and value as an individual.

Books open doors to new places…

This is not to say that all books must have characters that look like our children.

Books also act as windows into other cultures, experiences, ways of life, allowing us to travel to other places and connect with people who are not exactly like us.

When children read stories about people's lives, it helps them to develop the skills to understand the world through another person's perspective.