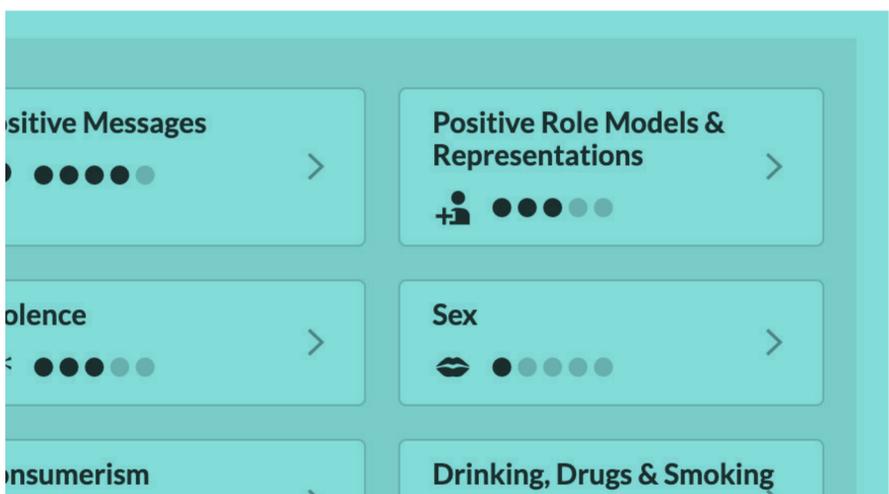


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REPRESENTATION'S BIG STRIDES

Given the historic Supreme Court nomination of Ketanji Brown Jackson and the unprecedented best picture win for CODA, it feels like a perfect time to revisit representation in media.

The people kids see on tv play a huge role in how their own sense of identity develops and how they think about diverse cultures.

According to a recent study by Common Sense Media, "parents say it is important that their children are exposed to content that helps them learn more about their own culture, religion, or lifestyle." And, "78% of parents want their children to be exposed to media that teaches them about cultures, religions, and lifestyles that are different from their own."

"Additionally, 78% of parents want their children to be exposed to media that teaches them about cultures, religions, and lifestyles that are different from their own, underscoring the importance of narratives and storylines that represent the diversity of a multicultural America."

- Common Sense Media

As a result of this study, Common Sense Media now adds a rating for diverse representation to the reviews on their site to represent "quality media that elevates quality portrayals and inclusion" and goes beyond "stereotypes and cookie cutter portrayals".

Here are some great examples of how this diverse focus on representation has come to the forefront this year:

ZOE SALDANA AND BESE - In 2017, Zoe Saldana founded the media company BESE to amplify Latinx stories told by Latinx voices so her kids would be able to enjoy content they are proud of. "I want my boys to know that within their culture, we're not just civil rights activists and martyrs, or criminals," she says.

"BESE's website showcases a mix of content across various media. Recent features include a video about Native Like Water, and a feature on the founders of Puerto Rico's only local makeup line."

LGBTQ CHARACTERS IN CARTOONS - Insider.com recently compiled a list of 259 LGBTQ characters in cartoons that "bust the myth that kids can't handle inclusion"

One of the key takeaways from this list, is how the representation of overtly queer characters in cartoons has vastly increased in the past 5 to 10 years. "I think about Danger & Eggs, I think about She-Ra, Steven Universe [and] just how overtly queer these cartoons are," journalist Abbey White says. "That is drastically different from the way characters have been allowed to singularly exist." (Victoria Whitley Berry - NPR)

LOVE IS BLIND - Sitcoms and family television most often show parental affection through the lens of white families with lots of overt friendliness and big expressions of **emotion**. "The range of personalities exhibited by several of the parents of Asian cast members allow for a more nuanced understanding of parenting, simultaneously challenging viewers to look at parental love outside squarely Western forms of affection, experts said." The parents on Love Is Blind offer a more graduated view of the wide variety of ways parents from different cultures show love. (Yimmy Yam - NBC News)

SESAME STREET: "Sesame Workshop is debuting a new Muppet named Ameera to bring more visibility to two underrepresented communities—kids with disabilities and displaced children from conflict zones around the world." (Zeenya Shah - KldScreen)

Ameera uses crutches and a wheelchair because of a spinal cord injury and will be joining Alhan Simsim, the Middle Eastern & North African version of Sesame Street, as well as a series of Watch, Play, Learn videos which are part of Sesame Streets' Play to Learn humanitarian program.