

# being seen

Directives for creating authentic  
and inclusive content

“ I definitely look for Black representation first and foremost when I'm looking at what cartoons or shows my two boys are watching. But I also look for diversity as well. It's gotten better but there's still a large majority, especially in the infant age, where a lot of the characters are white or there'll be that one token person of colour. But I definitely seek it out so that they can see themselves on screen.

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## CHILDREN'S CONTENT

### For Creators and Producers

- + Review the Core Themes Report Directives related to improving the complexity of characters and storylines, telling a story from outside your community, authentic casting and structural changes to increase authenticity. They all apply to creating children's content.
- + Review your content to ensure that the characters and storylines reflect the many diverse and intersecting identities of communities across Canada.
- + Consider the impact of the story, characters, character designs, and voice performance of the content. Might someone in the audience be hurt by a stereotype or missing representation? Are you missing an opportunity to better reflect the communities of your audience?

- + Consider representation even if the content involves non-humanoid characters in either live action or animation. Do not use non-humanoid characters as an excuse to avoid representation or argue that non-visible representation (e.g., voice performer, screenwriter, animator) is representation for the audience. If you do have non-humanoid characters, have you coded them to reflect biases (e.g., 'ugly' is evil, 'beautiful' is good) or the culture of the creators (e.g., adding brown skin to a character otherwise drawn as white, not drawing a Black character's natural hair)?
- + Due to historic anti-Black racism, there is a lack of representation of healthy two parent Black families. If there is a Black family in your content, is it subverting the racist stereotypes or upholding them?
- + Be aware that at least some parents are going to look into who created, performed and voiced the content. When they do, will the knowledge of the team make them more comfortable with the content or more concerned?
- + Consider researching the more diverse and reflective content that kids and parents are going to YouTube to find and how to integrate that into scripted entertainment content.
- + Consider integrating social media influencers, athletes and other media personalities from different underrepresented demographics, particularly for content for the 10 to 13 age group.
- + As parents are searching for specific content on YouTube, consider adding promotional content for your shows that are not on YouTube to a YouTube channel, tagged in terms of representation, to aid in discoverability. This would help parents find your content through a keyword search.

## Quick Fact

27.5% of Visible Minorities in Canada are between the ages of 0 and 14 - 2016 Canadian Census

## Further Reading

Less than 25% of Kids Say UK TV Represents them, BFI, 2021 <https://www.televisual.com/news/less-than-25-of-kids-say-uk-tv-represents-them/>

<http://www.bso.ben.ca/beingseen>

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