

LISTENING & LEARNING ABOUT DIVERSITY IN JEWISH LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

Description: Join experts **Aviva Brown**, **Joni Sussman** (Kar-Ben Publishing), and **Esme Raji Codell** (librarian/author/blogger) to discuss issues of diversity within modern children's literature: why it's important, how it is being achieved, who can/should write it, and how Jewish kidlit fits in.

Aviva Brown is the author of *Ezra's BIG Shabbat Question*, a children's picture book about a multiracial Jewish family. She's a passionate advocate for diversity in children's books, especially books for Jewish children. Her work has been featured in Kveller and Care.com. She is also North Carolina's Mother of the Year 2020.

Joni Sussman is the Publisher at Kar-Ben Publishing, an imprint of Lerner Publishing Group. Kar-Ben's concentration is Jewish content books for children and young readers, both fiction and non-fiction for preschool through 7th grade, including holiday books, life-cycle stories, Bible tales, folktales, board books, and activity books. In particular, Kar-Ben seeks stories that reflect the rich diversity of today's Jewish family. Joni is a Past-President of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, where she continues to serve as Chair of Holocaust Education, and President of Books for Africa.

Esmé Raji Codell is the author of many award-winning and highly acclaimed books for both adults and children, including *Educating Esmé* with over half a million copies in print and *Vive la Paris*, a 2007 Sydney Taylor honor winner. The recipient of a prestigious James Patterson Pageturner Award for spreading the excitement of books in an effective and original way, this "Superstar of Education" (*Scholastic Magazine*) and "First Lady of Read-Aloud" (*Teaching K-8*) uses her love of literature daily and joyfully as a teacher-librarian with the Chicago Public Schools.