

Equity and Inclusion

Meridian educates global citizens in an equitable, inclusive, and increasingly diverse community.

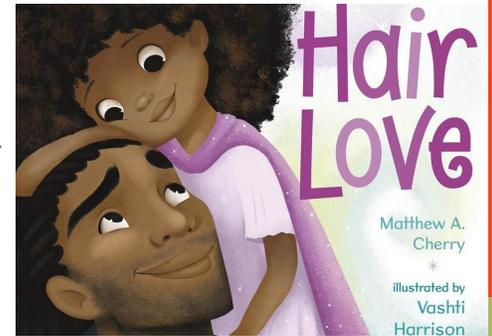


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Do Not Touch My Hair!

Last Friday, we enjoyed a presentation by Book-It Repertory Theatre based on the book [*Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*](#) by [Derrick Barnes](#) (author) and [Gordon C. James](#) (illustrator). Aimee Miles, our librarian, read this book during library classes, as well as the book [*Hair Love*](#) by [Matthew A. Cherry](#) and [Vashti Harrison](#). Mr. Cherry also created a video called "[Hair Love](#)," which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film.



These books, the play, and classroom conversations are part of our celebration of black and African American identity. Our faculty is also reflecting on and revising curriculum to ensure the representation of African American history, culture, and experiences throughout the year. This process requires intentionality and dedication as we continue increasing the representation of different identities and communities in our program.

We also want to take this opportunity to raise awareness of how African Americans of all ages often encounter uninvited hair touching, sometimes even by strangers. What may seem like a matter of simple curiosity can be an issue for many African Americans, who become tired of dealing with these uncomfortable moments way too often. Sometimes students in our community find themselves in this kind of situation. It is the responsibility of our adult community (parents and staff) to bring awareness to children and to interrupt these uninvited behaviors.

While recognizing that all children are curious, we want to teach children that respecting personal space should overcome curiosity. When having conversations about personal space, we also need to talk about consent, including why we should not touch the hair of other people without their permission. Parents can also use Social Thinking language (which teachers use at Meridian) by reminding their children that uninvited hair touching is an example of an "unexpected" behavior. Here is a book for children on this topic called [*Don't Touch My Hair!*](#)

For adult education purposes, please see this [YouTube video](#) to learn more about this issue that goes beyond consent. This video highlights how black hair touching can connect to feelings of otherness and objectification. It is important to keep in mind the complexity of our history in terms of discrimination and oppression, the impact of media, and white standards of beauty. Awareness is a necessary step in building a welcoming and inclusive community.

