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Volume 60 | Issue 1

Article 27

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4-28-2017

## Sullivan's "Cultivating the genius of black children: Strategies to close the achievement gap in the early years" (Book Review)

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### Recommended Citation

Ryan, Cari (2017) "Sullivan's "Cultivating the genius of black children: Strategies to close the achievement gap in the early years" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 60 : Iss. 1 , Article 27.  
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol60/iss1/27>

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Horton admits that the Bible can be difficult to understand, acknowledging that there are things that are beyond our ability to comprehend. Nevertheless, he does a good job of explaining major themes of Christianity with chapters such as *Jesus is God*, *God Is Three Persons*, *God Made The World But We've Made a Mess of It* and *God Made a Promise*. With each idea, he provides scripture to get the reader familiarized. He also relates the stories and messages to our current culture, making it easier to understand. Based solely on the subtitle, I thought it would focus even more on present day, but as Horton states "Jesus is not swept into your story. You are swept into his" (pg. 24).

All in all, this is a very helpful, informative book. It is an easy read and gives great general overviews of the Bible story, God's covenants, and even a comparative glimpse into other religions. It introduces readers to theological vocabulary and would benefit new Christians or those who need a refresher on the basics.

### Reviewer

Jessica Shuck, Cornerstone University

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Sullivan, D. R. (2016). *Cultivating the genius of black children: Strategies to close the achievement gap in the early years*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press. 166 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 9781605544052

*Cultivating the Genius of Black Children* provides educators the theories about the unique ways that black children learn as well as practical strategies for educators to incorporate into their everyday practice that will enhance the learning of black children. Debra Ren-Etta Sullivan, EdD, is the cofounder and president of the Praxis Institute for Early Childhood Education and has over twenty-five years of experience in higher education. Although this book provides examples for educators teaching from early childhood education to third grade, Sullivan's book provides invaluable insight into African American culture and the importance of creating collaborative relationships with black families. This professional development book is separated into two main sections: one on the learning styles and cultural intelligence of black children and the second part on the practical application of successful learning techniques for black children. Sullivan provides an overview of learning styles, multiple intelligences, and personality type theories for educators to understand the complex range of learning that takes place in a classroom. Sullivan provides insight into African American culture in order for educators to understand how to utilize curriculum and teaching strategies that are influenced by a black child's cultural background and the application of these techniques into a multi-racial classroom setting. Instead of being overwhelming, Sullivan provides many examples

and strategies for both beginning and advanced educators to utilize. *Cultivating the Genius of Black Children* is an excellent book that challenges educators to explore the vast abilities and cultures of students to improve curriculum and pedagogy.

**Reviewer**

Cari Ryan, Pacific Rim Christian University

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Plank, E. (2016). *Discovering the culture of childhood*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press. 196 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 9781605544625

The author of *Discovering the Culture of Childhood*, Emily Plank, has spent over a decade working in and researching the field of early education. Her roles in early childhood education include family child care provider, mentor, writer and consultant. Plank wrote this professional development book for those who work in the field of early childhood education, however the book is easily accessible to anyone with an interest in childhood development. Plank writes that in her experience, adults too often lack an understanding of children's behavior and warn how adults too often impose "grownup" expectations on children's actions and behavior. This misunderstanding of children's culture can create damaging situations that may impede children's learning development. Plank utilizes childhood development theories and the experiences of other early childhood educators to reveal how educators can appreciate and advocate for the unique culture of children. Each chapter of the book explores an aspect of children's culture, such as language and socialization through play. At the end of every chapter is a helpful section titled "Stories from the Field" that provides insight into how early educators have applied the knowledge of children's culture in ways that resulted in the educators no longer being what Plank describes as a tourist in a foreign land but transformed into "culturally aware outsiders." Plank's well-researched and perceptive book will be greatly appreciated by those who work in early childhood education as well as those with an interest in respecting and fostering the unique culture of children.

**Reviewer**

Cari Ryan, Pacific Rim Christian University