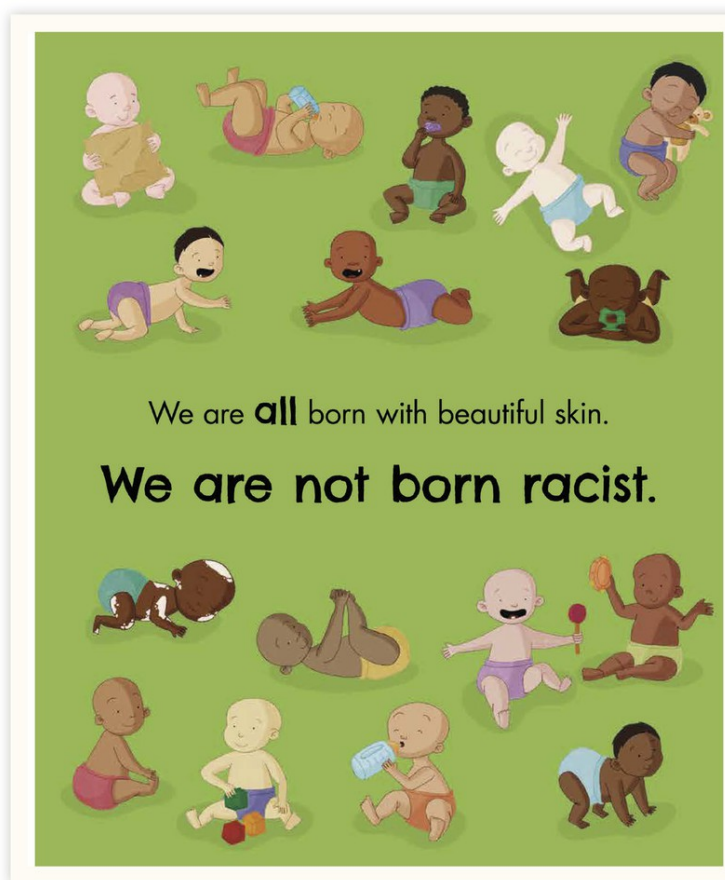




sometimes people say children are too young to discuss this subject. But we talk to them about climate change. Children understand difficult subjects, we just have to say it in a way that is age, stage and ability-appropriate



▷ She would be so delighted, ecstatic, that there's something that means her memory lives on and is watched by so many people around the world. A huge thank-you to all at CBeebies, A Productions, and so many more individuals who have made the show a massive success."

Laura is also pleased that the programme has showcased St Lucia. "It is amazing that my parents' country and culture is being shown so positively and people can see

what's special about St Lucia. It raises awareness of this beautiful country. Yes, I'm biased, but it's an amazing place! Parents tell me their children are saying they want to visit St Lucia and they're inspired to find out more about it.

"I did a school visit recently and they had a display all about St Lucia, and that, to me, was quite emotional. To see the excitement on the children's faces, the questions they were asking me – about my writing, my grandmother. I love doing author visits. The children get so much out of it. Coming from an education background, it's amazing."

My Skin, Your Skin, Laura's latest book, illustrated by Onyinye Iwu, is a powerful exploration of race, racism and empowerment, written in clear and accessible language. She wrote it in August 2020 (published in October 2021), shortly after the murder of George Floyd and the explosion of the Black Lives Matter movement that it sparked. "Before this there was an awareness of Black Lives Matter," Laura explains, "but because we were in lockdown and people were able to watch the news more and connect with what was happening on a global level, it was the first time many people really thought about how absolutely awful it was." Laura co-wrote a guide for parents, *Supporting You to Raise Antiracist Children*, which is available as a free, downloadable resource. An editor at Ladybird suggested she might write a book on the subject for children, hence, *My Skin, Your Skin*.

"I remember when I first started to write. On one of the pages it says, 'People can be anything they want to be.' And there's a Black boy being a ballet dancer. I put that ballet dancer in there because when I was working as a teacher – probably about 30 years ago – we went to a ballet performance and I was doing some recall with the children after the event and I said, 'Maybe I could be a ballet dancer.' One of the children responded, 'No, you can't, because you're Black.' On every single page of the book, there is something that is personal to me."

The book is aimed at young children, aged 4 to 7, and I ask Laura why it was important to write for this age bracket. "The other day, on social media, there was a question asking Black and Brown colleagues, 'When was your first experience of racism?' And the thread went on and on and on: adults recalling instances when they were 3 or 4. This is why the book is important. Sometimes people say children are too young to discuss this subject. But we talk to them about climate change. Children understand difficult subjects, we just have to say it in a way that is age, stage and ability-appropriate. Black and Brown children don't get a choice. Their parents can't say, 'We can't discuss this with you – you're too young.' Because we know children as young as 3 or 4 experience racism."

The book explains very clearly what racism is and why it is wrong. It encourages children to speak up when they encounter or witness racism. "People say I write in a really simplistic way. And I wonder if it's because I'm dyslexic. Maybe it's the way my brain works that I can understand complex research and academic work, but then I can break it down and translate it so it's digestible to anybody who