**The Benefits of Building Positive Self-Image: How can this help to close the academic achievement Gap**

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The academic achievement gap that plagues public education in the United States has been discussed and debated hundreds of times over in the past few decades. The fact is that students of color are lagging behind their white counterparts in academic test scores. Research points to the fact that although Black and Hispanic students score higher on achievement tests now than they did three decades ago, most of that growth happened during the 1970’s and 80’s in the middle of school desegregation. It appears that we have stagnated since then. One in five African American and one in four Hispanic teens respectively read below the basic reading levels.

**How can we begin to close this gap?**

According to Brian Spritzer and Joshua Aronson in their article *“Minding and mending the gap: Social psychological interventions to reduce educational disparities,”* students need role model exposure. They should be exposed to successful people who also look like them. They state in the article, that students are less intimidated by challenges when they see that a member of their group has succeeded in the same domain. This helps students to build positive self-image. When they have the ability to see themselves in another successful person from their group, it encourages them to overlook obstacles and work for better.

Another solution to closing the academic achievement gap discussed in the article was that we, as parents, teachers and community members, need to help children to think about their “possible selves.” This means encouraging students to see different, more positive versions of themselves. Studies have shown that students who visualize themselves in the place of reaching their goals have better well-being and persistence when facing challenges. If they can envision who they can be in the future, it can help them find meaning to what they are learning in the classroom. This equates to better focus, better engagement and eventually better grades.

**How can we help students visualize their possible selves?**

This is where our company, KithKids plays an essential role. KithKids Media is a newly launched company that specializes in helping parents, educators and communities build positive self-image in children. Specifically designed with children of color in mind, our slogan is “I can see me.” KithKids understands the need for children to see their possible future selves.

The vision of KithKids is to guarantee that every child has the resources necessary to visualize their better selves. We want to ensure that every child has an opportunity to imagine an exciting future. We understand that children of color are grossly misrepresented or underrepresented in the media, in books and in children’s toys. We provide our customers with multi-cultural media images of children’s characters in real world careers, with real life personality. We have carefully designed characters that represent the beauty and complexity in children of color. This includes minor details such as hairstyles, skin tone and facial features. We offer real portrayals of children of color, so that they can feel beautiful in their own skin.

We hope that by providing these products way we can help children become proud of who they are and to feel comfortable in their own skin. We imagine a world where their beauty is seen and appreciated.