**The Changing Face of Education: What can Educators do to prepare?**

The demographics of American schools are rapidly changing.  U.S Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced two years ago that the 2014-2015 school year would be the first time non-white students represented a majority in America’s public schools. But even as minority enrollment in schools has risen over the last several years, schools and districts have not been able to increase the number of diverse teachers fast enough. Research has shown that students respond positively when they are exposed to imagery of successful people who look like them. So if students of color are filling our classrooms and are not able to see that imagery in their teachers just yet, how can we bring that imagery into the classroom?

**Educators play a pivotal role in helping our students**

First of all, we can start by getting our community members involved. As educators we can bring in members of our students’ communities who look like our students and have succeeded outside of the classroom. In an article from the National Education Association, Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales, a Professor in the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University, said that “the goal should be to not only increase the number of minority teachers, but also work to identify and engage committed youngsters who will return to their communities to institute real change.” Educators can pull in community members who look like and can identify with the students from their neighborhoods as class volunteers, mentors and guest speakers. This will help students to see success in a member from their own racial group and build that positive imagery that is so needed.

**Building a classroom environment that respects diversity**

Another way that we can build positive imagery for diverse student populations is to create a learning environment that fosters and respects diversity. Our classrooms should help to build a positive self-image in our students. These types of environments help children gain positive ideas about themselves and helps introduce both students of color and white students to the understanding that all children are valuable and diversity is important. We know that it can be difficult to find materials that positively reflect students of color in a non-stereotypical way, even when school districts have an adequate budget to do this. There are just not enough materials out there that support diversity. This is where our company stepped in to fill the gap.

**What does KITHKids provide?**

KITHKids saw the need for better educational materials that provide positive, non-stereotypical images of students of color. We provide educators and parents positive media images that demonstrate confidence and success in children of color. 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 feels beautiful in their own skin, and that diversity is celebrated and not hidden in the classroom. Our images come with background stories of the diverse characters that can be shared in the classroom and implemented into lesson planning as often as desired or as a supplement to core classroom curriculum. Both educators and parents may purchase images or products to help reinforce the importance of diversity both in the classroom and at home. Together we can insure that we are prepared for the new look of the American classroom and that all of our children have the confidence they need to reach for success.