What To Look For

1. **Is the vocabulary demeaning?**
   Are terms like "squaw", "papoose", "chief", "redskin", "savage", "warrior" used?

2. **Do the Indians talk like Tonto or in the noble savage tradition?**
   See *Indian in the Cupboard* and *The Legend of Jimmy Spoon* for examples.

3. **Are the Indians all dressed in the standard buckskin, beads and feathers?**
   Again, see *Indian in the Cupboard*, and any book in which any character "dresses like an Indian".

4. **Are Indians portrayed as an extinct species, with no existence as human beings in contemporary America?**
   This is the whole "vanishing Indian" concept.

5. **Is Indian humanness recognized?**
   Do animals "become" Indians simply by putting on "Indian" clothes and carrying a bow and arrow? Do children "dress up like Indians" or "play Indian" as if "Indian" was a role that one could assume as one can dress up like doctors or cowboys or baseball players? For comparison, do animals or children also dress up as African-Americans or play Italian?

6. **Do Native Americans appear in alphabet and counting books as objects that are counted?**

7. **Do Native American characters have ridiculous imitation "indian" names, such as "Indian Two Feet" OR "Little Chief"?**

8. **Is the artwork predominated by generic "Indian" designs? or has the illustrator taken care to reflect the traditions and symbols of the particular people in the book?**

9. **Is the history distorted, giving the impression that the white settlers brought civilization to native peoples and improved their way of life?** Are terms like massacre, conquest, civilization, customs, superstitions, ignorant, simple, advanced, dialects (instead of languages) used in such a way as to demean native cultures and achievements to indicate the superiority of European ways?

10. **Are Indian characters successful only if they realize the futility of traditional ways and decide to "make it" in white society?**

11. **Are white authority figures - teachers, social workers - able to solve the problems of native children that native authority figures have failed to solve?** (Are there any native authority figures?)

12. **Are the perceptions of women as subservient drudges present?** Or are women shown to be the integral and powerful part of native societies that they are?

13. **Finally and most importantly, is there anything in the book that would make a native American child feel embarrassed or hurt to be what he is?** Can the child look at the book and recognize and feel good about what he sees?