

Resources for talking to children and youth about racial differences, inequality and how to support racial equality

Tips for Talking About Racial Differences & Racism:

Source for below information: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/Talking-to-Children-About-Racial-Bias.aspx>

From a young age, children may have questions about racial differences and parents must be prepared to answer them. But, it's important to keep your child's developmental readiness in mind.

- **For preschoolers:** At this age, your child may begin to notice and point out differences in the people around you (i.e., at the grocery store, at the park, etc.). If your child asks about someone's skin tone, you might say, *"Isn't it wonderful that we are all so different!"* You can even hold your arm against theirs to show the differences in skin tones in your family.
- **For grade-schoolers:** This is the age that is important to have open talks with your child about race, diversity, and racism. Discussing these topics will help your child see you as a trusted source of information on the topic, and he or she can come to you with any questions. Point out stereotypes and racial bias [in media](#) and books such as villains or "bad guys" in movies.
- **If your child makes comments or asks you questions about race based on school incidents or something they read or watched:** Further the discussion with questions such as, *"How do you feel about that?"* and *"Why do you think that?"* This is also helpful if your child heard something insensitive or if your child experienced racial bias themselves. Before responding to his or her statement or question, figure out where it came from and what it means from his or her perspective. *See [Talking to Children About Tragedies & Other News Events](#) for more information.*

These conversations begin to lay the groundwork for your child to accept and respect everyone's differences and similarities. As children mature, the answers to questions will become more complex. These are moments to learn what your child understands or is struggling to understand about racial bias.

To create a culture of inclusiveness, we all must look at and acknowledge our biases, so we can do something about the ones that are unfair or cause harm to others—like racial bias.

Understanding the way people feel about and behave toward those outside their own group can help communities heal after a tragedy, as well as prevent future ones.

Additional Resources to Help Parents Address Racism & Discrimination:

- [Teaching Children Cultural and Racial Pride](#)
- [Help Your Kids Find Books with Diverse Characters](#) (Common Sense Media)
- [Apps and Games with Diverse Characters](#)(Common Sense Media)
- [Beyond the Golden Rule. A Parent's Guide to Preventing and Responding to Prejudice](#)(Tolerance.org)
- [A Conversation on Race](#) (New York Times)
- [Racism and Its Impact on Child and Adolescent Health](#) (AAP Policy Statement)

Be open and honest. Some people get treated unfairly based on their skin color, culture or religion. By doing this, we help prepare them to challenge these issues when they arise.

Model it. Talking to your child about the importance of embracing differences and treating others with respect is essential, but it's not enough. Acknowledge difference and emphasize the positive aspects of our differences. Encourage your child to talk about what makes them different, and discuss ways that may have helped or hurt them at times. Similarities become more powerful. Remember silence indicates acceptance

Do something. Take a stand when you witness injustice. This is the time to help our children grow into adults who value and honor diversity.

For teens—keep talking. Use current issues from the news, as a springboard for discussion. Ask your teen what they think about the issues. Discuss the importance of valuing differences is essential, but modeling this message is even more vital. Evaluate your own circle of friends or the beliefs you hold about certain groups of people.

Encourage activism. Promote ways to get involved in causes you care about.

Explain what protest means as developmentally appropriate for the child. Seven years and older is an average recommendation. Everyone has a right to their own opinion and to voice it in America, but you also have to respect others' opinions. A typical goals of non aggressive protest is to inspire positive social change and protection of human rights. Sometimes, people make poor choices and react with aggression because of the feelings they have. It is ok to protest in a friendly way.

Additional resources:

“How to Talk to Your Kids about Boston’s Police Brutality Protests” - A child psychiatrist and a social-justice educator weigh in.

<https://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/2020/06/03/kids-police-brutality-protests/>

Sesame Street Racism Town Hall - <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/02/us/cnn-sesame-street-standing-up-to-racism/index.html>

Nickelodeon - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2020/06/02/nickelodeon-cant-breathe-psa/>

“They’re not too young to talk about race”:

<http://www.childrenscommunityschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/theyre-not-too-young-1.pdf>

This site has a variety of books that center around brown and black lead characters dealing with tough issues: <https://thebrownbookshelf.com/>

This article is more geared towards a classroom/school setting however it is still a great article that has applications for all environments.

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2018/teaching-learning-race-and-racism>

Tool kit on how to talk to children and youth about race and racism:

<https://www.parenttoolkit.com/social-and-emotional-development/advice/social-awareness/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-race-and-racism>

How to talk to children and youth about tragedies and other world events:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Talking-To-Children-About-Tragedies-and-Other-News-Events.aspx>

This PDF outlines some good tips on how to talk with children and youth about protests:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5694f5c6bfe87314267a8a1b/t/5a9fe809e4966b2fb99f7627/1520429067378/Talking+With+Kids+6+and+Under.pdf>