



Select Sources

PROVIDE AGE APPROPRIATE INFORMATION—(Children develop at different rates.)

- Talk to them about diversity, equality, and prejudice.
- Supplement your conversations with real world experiences.

“Beyond Prejudice” <http://www.beyondprejudice.com>

Education Toolkit <http://www.raceandfaith.com>

“The Danger of Not Talking to Your Children About Race”

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/blogs/parenting/2012/04/04/the-danger-of-not-talking-to-your-children-about-race/>

“How to Talk to Kids about White Privilege,” (for older kids)

<http://www.allparenting.com/my-family/articles/969119/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-white-privilege>

“Inoculating our Children Against Racism”

<http://www.handinhandparenting.org/article/inoculating-our-children-against-racism/>

“Research-Based Advice on Teaching Children Not to Be Racist,” *The Atlantic*

<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/04/research-based-advice-on-teaching-children-not-to-be-racist/255736/>

“Resources for Talking to Kids About Racism”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kristen-howerton/talking-to-kids-race-racism-books_b_2618305.html

“Talking to Our Children about Racism and Diversity”

http://www.civilrights.org/publications/reports/talking_to_our_children/

“Teaching “Diversity”: A Place to Begin”

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/teaching-diversity-place-begin-0>

“Trayvon Martin and ‘The Talk’ Black Parents have with their Teenage Sons” http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/26/trayvon-martin-and-the-talk-black-parents-have-with-their-teenage-sons/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0

“What to Tell Your Child about Prejudice and Discrimination”

http://archive.adl.org/what_to_tell/print.html

“Who Am I? Race Awareness Game”, and “Guess My Race” iPhone/iPod apps



TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT RACISM

TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT RACE; HELP THEM MAKE SENSE OF THE DIFFERENCES THEY ARE NOTICING

Research indicates the following:

- Children, even babies, notice differences in people.
- Children begin to comment about physical differences as soon as they can talk.
- Children learn about prejudice and stereotypes from the people and the world around them and may notice any of the following: lack of diversity in social groups and organizations; lack of diversity in leadership positions at school, church, or businesses; negative comments or jokes about other groups of people.
- Children also learn about prejudice and stereotypes from the media—television, radio, books, and magazines, and even schoolbooks. Some media outlets present misinformation about groups. Sometimes a child’s only exposure to other groups is television shows and books.

LET YOUR KIDS TALK ABOUT RACE

- Talking about race reduces prejudices, helps kids feel more comfortable at school, and improves performance.
- Not talking about race interferes with communication skills, and leaves children of color feeling less accepted.
- Not talking about differences (and similarities) often results in children thinking there is something wrong with discussing racial, cultural, and religious issues.
- Not talking about discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes can result in children thinking that is the way things are supposed to be.

Look for teachable moments.

Even a non-verbal child can be taught. For instance a child might be patting the head of someone with very different hair. You can say, “He has straight hair; you have curly hair.”

INOCULATE YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT RACISM

Children with strong self-esteem are less likely to feel wounded and more likely not to take their pain out on others.

- Go out of your way to let your children know that you accept them as unique human beings.
- Use active listening techniques so your child feels heard

Help your children to develop a sense of empathy and consideration.

- Encourage them to consider how other people feel in a situation.
- Use books, movies, and real life situations to identify conflicts and consider how others might feel.

If your children say something offensive about another race, culture or religion, don't assume they are racist.

- Stay calm.
- Try to help them figure out what is bothering them, where they have heard the statements.
- Gently dissuade them by saying, "I know some people say X or Y but it has been my experience...." (Give an example that is contrary to the prejudicial statement.)

Be a good role model for your children.

- Examine your own prejudices and be aware of how they influence your behavior and attitudes.
- It's okay not to know all the answers. If they ask a difficult question to which you don't know the answer, take a problem solving approach—tell the children you will research the issue together (if age appropriate).

Talk openly about differences and similarities among people

- Encourage your children to embrace complexity—we are all different outside and inside and that we are all similar inside and outside.
- Encourage your children to begin to recognize how culture, religion, history, heritage, customs, physical disabilities, class, and individual preferences influence and sometimes direct behavior, customs, appearances, and daily practices.
- Take an inventory of your home's contents—toys, books, art, movies—and assess for diversity.

Teach your child to be loving and open.

TAKE ACTION WITH YOUR KIDS

Children have a strong sense of justice; appeal to it!

- Create firm rules and goals about how you and your family will treat people—no teasing, joking, or excluding people based on "race, religion, ethnicity, accent, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or appearance." (ADL.org)
- Set boundaries to limit the use of bigoted language around your children, using "I" messages to inform the person to not use such language around you and your children.

(See our pamphlet, "Strategies for Responding to Racist Comments and Jokes.")

Provide opportunities for integrated interaction. Research indicates that children who work and play together toward common goals develop more positive attitudes towards each other.

- Join music groups, school and community clubs, sports teams, and other activities that increase interactions with people of other cultures.
- Attend museums, festivals, concerts, and library exhibits to maximize interaction with diverse members of the community.
- Use books, movies, TV shows to gain positive insights into other cultures.

Regularly discuss examples of stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice that you and the children observe.

- Research indicates developing critical thinking skills combats prejudice.

Encourage your children to create positive change. Discuss possible responses to racist events in your world.

- Painting over racist graffiti, writing letters to a television producer who promotes stereotyped programming, or confronting a peer's discriminatory behavior are all appropriate actions.
- Since confronting classmates can be difficult, rehearse "I" messages ahead of time. For example, "If another child is called a hurtful name, an observer might simply say, "Don't call him/her that. Call him/her by his/her name." Or, if your child is the victim, "Don't call me that. That's not fair." or "You don't like to be called bad names and neither do I." In all cases, try to help your child to feel comfortable in pointing out unfairness." (ADL.org)