

Talking About Race with Young Children

Kids observe and absorb our words and behaviors, including those related to race. Talking to them about race is simpler than you might think. It starts with teachable moments, good children's books, and open-ended questions. We can't predict their questions, but we can listen, foster curiosity, and encourage compassion.

Why is it important?

Children collect clues from their limited experiences to make sense of the world. These stories, unchecked, become truths for them, and they begin to form race-based opinions. When you have age-appropriate conversations about race with your child early, you can support their limited categorizing and meaning-making skills to create more realistic stories in their minds about others.

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What can you do to help?

Move away from teaching your children to be colorblind. Instead of shying away from the conversation, encourage their curiosity, thoughts, and observations about skin color. You don't have to have all the answers, just a commitment to open dialogue and active listening. Raising your children to see and celebrate differences in others and guiding them in talking about race-based issues is a step in creating a more just world.

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Embrace Diversity at Home

Conduct a survey of your home to see where you can diversity your child's surroundings:

- Books, toys and movies
- Music and art
- Your family's friends/inner circle
- Professionals (i.e. pediatrician, dentist, tutors, teachers, etc.)



Encourage Questions About Differences

You can't always predict what your children will ask you, but you can be prepared to listen and encourage them to continue to question, remain curious and practice compassion in the world. Sometimes, the best way to support their learning is to ask more questions, listen and then share your feelings:

- Thank you for sharing. Tell me more.
- What would you do?
- How does that make you feel?
- How can we help?



Invest in Your Community

Seek out ways that you can engage in learning and supporting your community.

- Schedule monthly cultural events for your family to visit.
- Join and donate to organizations that support anti-racist practices.
- Buy from local Black-owned businesses.

