



One of the most important steps we can take to facilitate change is to TALK about diversity, bias, race, and inclusion in our families and with our children.

♥ Silence or avoidance of talking about race and racism may alert children to the negative significance some people put on differences. Adults in our children's lives need to proactively model a positive attitude toward diversity and inclusion to encourage the same in our children.

♥ It's never too early to talk about race. Building the change we need happens over the course of many conversations. As much as we hope for a world where a person's skin color does not impact how they are treated, that is not our reality, and children are not "colorblind." Children as early as age 2 have been shown to internalize racial biases (Hirschfeld, 2008)[1].

♥ Children's natural curiosity leads them to notice similarities and differences in others. Start discussions with young children by highlighting similarities and celebrating how differences make us unique and special.



Instead of shushing a child for observing differences such as, "Her skin is so dark." Try: "You are noticing that people are unique and different. I think her skin is beautiful; one skin color is not better than the other. Isn't it amazing how many shades our skin can be?" If necessary due to the nature of the comment or question, apologize and rephrase in a sensitive and appropriate way.

♥ With older children, point out and discuss when you see stereotypes or racial bias in the media.

♥ Talk to your child about words and stereotypes that are not ok to say, share, or repeat. Understand that with the ubiquitous nature of social media, children are likely to encounter a racist slur before they understand the meaning or historical context.

♥ Be a role model. Listen and learn in order to model change for our children. Read, join or start book groups, community discussions and other education efforts sponsored by local libraries and community organizations.




♥ Consider your child's books and toys: do they represent the diversity of our world? Proactively bring diverse and inclusive toys, books, and other media into your home.

♥ Discuss often! Read books together that reflect a variety of backgrounds and spark questions and conversation. Ask questions and show that you care what they have to say.



"Do you see yourself or people you know in the characters?"

"How is this character's experience different than yours? What is the same?"

-  Advocate for diversity in our community, workplace and children's classrooms, including through training and changes to curriculum and policies.
-  Make a commitment as a family to expand your connections and experiences. Invite friends of color for play dates and/or adult get togethers. Try new cuisines. Learn about the destination country, language, and traditions before going there for vacation.
-  Speak up when you encounter or witness instances of bias and racism in daily life and encourage children to do the same!



Introduce the idea of an “upstander” and practice saying something in a way that feels natural. We often freeze in these moments, but having a phrase ready, such as “hey, that’s not funny to me,” might make it easier to speak up.



Encourage children to participate in efforts that work toward positive change.



Sources and Suggested Resources:

- [Talking Race with Young Children](#) (NPR)
- [Why All Parents Should Talk with Their Kids About Social Identity](#) (NPR)
- [Talking to Young Children About Race and Racism](#) (PBS)
- [Children Are Not Colorblind](#) (Erin N. Winkler, Ph.D.)
- [Talking to Children About Racial Bias](#) (healthychildren.org)
- [Disrupting Racism and Bias at Home, at School, and at Work](#) (Northwestern)

[1] Hirschfeld, Lawrence. (2012). Children's Developing Conceptions of Race. Handbook of Race, Racism, and the Developing Child. 37-54. 10.1002/9781118269930.ch3.

