

From the Wilson PTG committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT RACISM:

1. Do your own work first. Self-reflect on biases prior to (and alongside) introducing topics of race, identity, racism, and discrimination to children.
Ideas:
2. Children notice difference. It is a natural part of how human brains are wired. It is okay (and important) to talk about it. Exposure and framing difference positively are key to reducing biases about difference.
Ideas:
 - Explore stories on <https://raceconscious.org/>
3. Introduce ideas of race, privilege, racism, and discrimination in simple and age-appropriate terms. It is important for caregivers to know that it is possible to give simple descriptions of complex concepts.
Ideas:
 - Rather than ‘shushing’ a child who comments on someone’s skin color, a simple explanation like “people have different colored skin because of something called melanin. The more melanin a person has, the darker their skin is” can suffice.
 - [PBS kid’s How to Talk Honestly with Children about Racism](#)
 - [Sesame Street’s Coming Together: Standing Up to Racism, A Town Hall for Kids and Families](#)
 - [They’re Not Too Young to Talk About Race](#)
4. Consider racial trauma that may be experienced or witnessed by children of color. Focus on the impact on the child, rather than intention of the perpetrator, and validating emotions related to these experiences.
Ideas:
 - [When It Comes to Bias, We Must Prioritize Impact over Intent](#)
5. Make sure to highlight resilience and cultural strengths. It is important for both for White children and children of color to understand the positives of different cultures and not just the struggles.
Ideas:
 - Ensure that the books you have do not solely focus on the Civil Rights movement or specific historical figures. Books that depict varied identities, family structures, and cultures allow children to see themselves (and for White children to see others who don’t look like them) represented in the first day of school, losing a tooth, and other routine children’s book activities. This helps to normalize the diversity of children in their daily lives in addition to highlighting historical or heroic roles.

Adapted from: Lingras KA. Talking With Children About Race and Racism. J Health Serv Psychol. 2021;47(1):9-16. doi: 10.1007/s42843-021-00027-4. Epub 2021 Jan 23. PMID: 33521653; PMCID: PMC7826149.

We welcome your suggestions of other resources. Please send them to: janelleclauser@gmail.com