

SAFE SPACE RADIO

TIPS & STRATEGIES

Talking to White Kids About Race & Racism

If you want to start this conversation in your own family...

- Bring it up. Start noticing race out loud in your everyday conversation with your kids.
- Ask questions. Make observations about who is included. Say, "I'm enjoying this [book, movie, show], but I notice that all of the characters are white. What do you think about that?"
- Notice inequality and read about the history of discrimination that underlies it.
- With young kids, talk about kindness and meanness, fairness and unfairness. Even very young kids can understand justice in these terms.
- It's okay not to know something. Learn alongside your kids. Say, "I don't know the answer to that, but let's find out!"
- Set an example. If you hear someone say something racist, speak up. Your kids will follow your lead, especially when challenging racism among other white people.
- Name whiteness. Kids notice difference, and it's okay to acknowledge it. Say, "Have you ever noticed how white our community is?"
- Talk about history. Learn about and acknowledge the indigenous people who lived where you do for centuries before it was taken from them.

Things to keep in mind...

- It's never too late to start this conversation.
- You don't have to get it right the first time.
- Having white privilege doesn't mean that we don't have hardships or struggles in our lives. It just means that we have some advantages, *simply because we're white*—advantages that people of color don't have.
- Racism is like a smog that we all breathe in. You can be both a good person *and* someone who has absorbed a lot of racist ideas. Uncovering our own unconscious biases and prejudices doesn't mean you're bad, it means you have the courage to be honest.
- If you're worried about protecting your kids, consider that this conversation has many benefits: it will build intimacy and trust in your family, make your kids more resilient, more empathetic, and better friends. It helps make a difference for the next generation.

Get creative with it!

If you're a parent or a teacher and you have a story about talking to children about race and racism, we'd love to hear it! Leave us a voicemail at (617) 600-8419.