

CREATING SAFE SPACES

GUIDE TO APPROACHING THE RACE CONVERSATION BASED ON AGE

A curated collection of books, videos, discussion guides, and activities to support families, educators, and community members in engaging in age-appropriate and meaningful conversations about race, identity, and equity.



Talking about race at home is an essential part of raising socially aware, empathetic, and confident children. These conversations help children of all ages develop understanding, challenge bias, and engage respectfully with differences. Creating Safe Spaces for Conversations About Race offers parents practical strategies, activities, and resources to begin and sustain these important discussions.

This guide emphasizes that starting the dialogue is just the first step - it takes repetition, reflection, and continued learning to make these conversations meaningful. By building trust, practicing active listening, encouraging curiosity, and being honest about your own learning journey, you create an environment where children feel safe to ask questions, express concerns, and explore complex topics.

Discussing race can be challenging, but it is a vital part of preparing children to thrive in today's diverse world. When approached openly and consistently, these conversations can strengthen empathy, deepen understanding, and inspire children to be thoughtful, and inclusive members of their communities.

TOOLS & RESOURCES TO START CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE BY AGE

Toddlers (2-4)	Preschoolers (4-6)	Early Elementary (6-8)
Books: Brown Sugar Baby by Kevin Lewis (Baby-2) Our Skin by Megan Madison & Jessica Ralli Shades of People by Shelley Rotner Skin Color Cookie Color Sugary Sweet Me! by Nancy Golden We All Belong by Nathalie Goss & Alex Goss We Care by Megan Madison & Jessica Ralli Videos: What Is Race? How To Talk To Kids About Identity and Race Circle Time with Khan Academy Kids Explaining Race	Books: All the Colors We Are/Todos los colores de nuestra piel by Katie Kissinger Chocolate Me! By Taye Diggs Our Diversity Makes Us Stronger by Elizabeth Cole We All Belong by Nathalie Goss & Alex Goss Sulwe by Lupita Nyong Parent/Family Discussion Guide Videos: Caillou Stands Against Racism Caillou Cartoon Gary Learns About Racism Let's Talk About Race Sesame Street: What is Racism?	Books: A Kids Book About Racism by Jelani Memory More Than Peach by Bellen Woodard I Am Mixed by Garcelle Beauvais & Sebastian A. Jones Something Happened In Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins & Ann Hazzard Videos: Gary Learns About Racism Let's Talk About Race

Late Elementary/Middle School (9-12)	Teenagers (13 and Up)
Books: Front Desk by Kelly Young Parent Discussion Guide Indian No More by Charlene Willing McManis & Traci Sorrell New Kid by Jerry Craft Parent/Family Discussion Guide Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You by Sonja Cherry-Paul, Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi The Talk: Conversations about Race, Love & Truth (10-17) by Wade Hudson & Cherly Willis Hudson You Don't Know Everything, Jilly P! by Alex Gino Parent/Family Discussion Guide Movies: And the Children Shall Lead (9+) Conversation starter: What would you do if you were faced with the same situation as the kids in the movie? Can you think of examples that show how race still affects the way people are treated today? Hidden Figures (10+) Conversation starter: How do the lessons from the civil rights movement apply today? What has changed? What hasn't? How are people still discriminated against?	Books: Dear Martin by Nic Stone The Skin I'm In by Sharon G. Flake The Talk: Conversations about Race, Love & Truth (10-17) Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi Who Will Tell My Brother? By Marlene Carvell Movies: The Hate U Give (13+) Conversation starter: One character in the movie says that "White folks want diversity but not too much diversity" -- what do you think she means? Do you agree? 13th (16+) Conversation starter: What surprises/upsets you most about our country's treatment of African American citizens over its long history?

Resources For Parents

Books

[How To Be An Antiracist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi

[Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racially Unjust America](#) by Jennifer Harvey

[Speaking of Race](#) by Celeste Headless

[Something Happened in our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice](#) by Marianna Celano

[So You Want to Talk About Race](#) by Ijeoma Oluo

[Walking in Circles](#) by Barbara A. Sizemore

[We Want To Do More Than Survive](#) by Bettina L. Love

[White Fragility: Why It's So Hard For White People to Talk About Racism](#) by Robin Diangelo

[Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together In the Cafeteria?](#) by Beverly Daniel Tatum

Videos

[TED Talk: Is My Skin Brown Because I Drank Chocolate Milk?](#)

When her 3-year-old son told her that a classmate told him that his skin was brown because he drank chocolate milk, Dr. Tatum, former president of Spelman College and a visiting scholar at Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service, was surprised. As a clinical psychologist, she knew that preschool children often have questions about racial difference, but she had not anticipated such a question. But through conversations with her preschool son, followed by talking to teachers, colleagues and parents, she came to realize it is the things we don't say and the matters we don't discuss with our children that find their way into racist dialogue and thinking.'

[Let's Talk About Race](#)

Common Reads "Let's Talk About Race"

Race is part of our story, but it isn't all we are — because, beneath our skin, we all look the same. Our differences are in the details.

[How to Talk About Racism: It's All About Safety](#)

Maria Moss, a VitalSmarts Certified Trainer, shares a tip for safely discussing inclusion and racial equality. These aren't easy conversations, but when both parties feel safe, they can learn from one another, better understand, and begin to create change. For more skills on speaking up when it matters most, visit

<https://www.vitalsmarts.com/saythat>.

[PBS KIDS Talk About | Race, Racism & Identity | PBS KIDS](#)

How do you have serious conversations with your kids? In "PBS KIDS Talk About: Race, Racism, and Identity" real families sat down to have honest conversations about these important topics in an age-appropriate way and offer viewers ideas to build on as they continue these important conversations at home.

[Race Conversation for Black, White Families is Worlds Apart](#)

"Nightline" brought together a diverse group of parents, children and officers to have frank conversations about race, justice and the role of police.

[Racial Equality: Being an Ally Starts with Your Intention](#)

VitalSmarts Master Trainer Maria Moss shares a tip for how to be an ally in racial equality by first being clear about your intentions, goals, and actions. For more on speaking up when it matters most, visit <https://www.vitalsmarts.com/saythat>.

[Stand up, speak up](#)

If you hear someone being diminished, be an ally. If you see someone being excluded, be an ally. If someone's voice needs amplifying, be an ally. If people need educating, be an ally. We created a film, 'Stand up, speak up' to remind us that it's up to all of us to be allies—even when it's not easy. It challenges us all to use our voices and speak up. To be visible and vocal allies.

[When You Look At Me](#)

When You Look at Me is the product of a collective effort to challenge people to think about what they can do every day to make a difference. Our hope is that When You Look at Me engages people on the all-important agenda of equality, diversity and inclusion and perhaps challenges them to think differently.

Articles

[Kindergarten teacher breaks down racism and activism in video kids can understand](#)

[Colorblindness: The New Racism?](#)

[Why saying "I don't see race at all" just makes racism worse](#)

Links

[Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum's website](#)

[Let's Talk How To Talk To Kids About Race](#)

[Social Justice Books](#)

[What is Racism?](#)

[How to Talk to Kids About Race and Racism Webinar](#) | Care.com

Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, a nationally recognized authority on racial issues in America and a clinical child psychologist, shares how you can talk to and teach your kids about race, racism, and protests. This live Q&A webinar, hosted by Care.com CEO Tim Allen, includes guidance on how to have important – often difficult – conversations with kids of all ages about race that are empathetic, constructive, and compassionate.

[10 tips for teaching and talking to kids about race](#) | embracerace.org

These tips are designed to help parents of all backgrounds talk to and guide their children about race early and often by lifting age-appropriate activities that can be incorporated easily into your daily life.

Books Matter: Children's and Young Adult Literature

[Books about Race and Racism from ADL](#)
