Conversations: Talking with kids about race



Does the adult looking through the camera at these children see what a child sees? – photo courtesy of Pixabay

No matter your skin coloration, you will have the first opportunity to teach your kids about racism in the United States. To help you approach the topic, therapist Dina Ricciardi culled through the internet to pick out resources to start a dialogue. – Drs. Lai and Kardos

Lately, conversations and news coverage about racism surround us. Images of unrest and violence have covered our news screens, affecting our country, our communities, and sometimes our own homes. On top of the global pandemic of COVID-19, navigating the topic of race and race relations with your family can feel downright overwhelming. Adults may be

experiencing a whole range of feelings. Emotions may range from anger to sadness to fear and beyond. While us parents want to teach our kids, we also want to protect them. We wonder, do we talk with them about what they see on television and social media? Or do we shield them from serious problems?

Our understanding and beliefs about race, whether our own race or others', is deeply personal and rooted in our own unique experiences. As parents, we may feel unprepared and not know how to address our children's questions and concerns. Therefore, we may avoid conversations about race.

Fortunately, there are many available resources. Many educators, mental health experts, and medical professionals are sharing information to equip us with knowledge and confidence. Below is a handful of the offerings.

Resources on talking with kids about race:

The Child Mind Institute
https://childmind.org/article/racism-and-violence-how-to-help-kids-handle-the-news/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=%20Parents%20Guide%20to%20Problem%20Behavior&utm_campaign=Weekly-06-02-20

The American Psychological Association
https://www.apa.org/res/parent-resources/index

Embrace Race www.embracerace.org

Book Recommendations:

Books about a variety of races
https://www.todaysparent.com/family/books/kids-books-that-talk-about-racism/#gallery/books-that-talk-about-racism/slide-1

Books with Characters of Color
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/books-with-characters-of-color

Books for Asian-American Children and Young Adults
https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/13-best-asian-american-children-s-young-adult-books-2019-n1078226

Book Recommendations for Adults:

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library
https://www.nypl.org/blog/2020/06/09/schomburg-center-black-liberation-reading-list

Well Read Black Girl
www.wellreadblackgirl.com

Links to issues of racism, police violence and discrimination (says COVID, but not about COVID):

https://www.pa-fsa.org/Admin/Dealing-With-Covid-19-Copy

These are just a few of the resources available to help you wade into challenging conversations about race. As stated by Dr. Howard Stevenson from the Penn Graduate School of Education, “The more you listen for what your child already knows, what they are concerned about, what they are afraid of, the more you’ll be able to help them speak and feel confident…and keep listening, because your child will need you to keep that conversation going.”

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