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Tips for Talking to White Children about Race



LONG ISLAND
**STRONG
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ALLIANCE

As parents and educators, it is important to address race and have open and honest conversations with our children from a young age. If you and/or your children are white, you may feel less inclined to talk about this topic, but it is just as important of a discussion to have. Here are some helpful tips for initiating and continuing the conversation surrounding race with your children.

1

Examine Your Own Biases



Children model their own thoughts and behaviors after what they observe from parents and other adult figures. Words, actions, and even body language from a parent can have a profound influence on children. Be aware of your own prejudices before speaking to your child about race.

2

Make Observations & Ask Questions

Pointing out instances of injustice, inequality, and discrimination to your children is a good place to start this conversation. For example, when watching a show or reading a book together that has a lack of diversity, consider mentioning, "All of the characters look the same. What do you think about that?". Prompts such as these will allow your child to start thinking about race and articulate their emotions.

3

Talk About History



An important aspect of all racial and ethnic groups is their history. Addressing topics such as slavery and the removal of indigenous groups is critical in order to give an accurate portrayal to your child. This also acknowledges the struggles that these groups have faced and why these conversations are so important.

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Learn Alongside Your Children



It is completely okay to not know the answer to a question your child has about race. Instead of dismissing the question, make it a point to research the topic together in order to become more knowledgeable and informed.

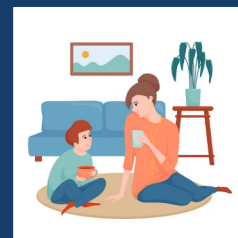
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Prepare Your Child to Be an Ally

Raising awareness, developing empathy, and inspiring action and change are the most important outcomes from a conversation with children about race. Start suggesting things like standing up for a friend or classmate of a different race if they are being mistreated. In addition, set this example of being an ally by speaking up if you witness a racist comment or action in day-to-day life.

6

Keep An Open Dialogue



A conversation about race is not meant to be a one-time occurrence. Parents should aim to keep the dialogue surrounding race open with their children, and revisit it often to reinforce these ideas.

It is never too late to begin a conversation about race with your children! For more information and additional resources on this topic, please visit the linked references below and our LISSA website.

References: [Forbes \(2020\) - "How To Talk To Kids About Race"](#)
[PBS Kids for Parents \(2020\) - "How to Talk Honestly With Children About Race"](#)
[NPR \(2020\) - "How White Parents Can Talk To Their Kids About Race"](#)
[Safe Space Radio \(2023\) - "Talking to White Kids About Race and Racism"](#)

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