

Stay Ahead of the Game

Children are taught to notice differences between shapes and colors from a young age. Consequently, they also start noticing differences in the people around them.

You are critical in guiding how they handle these differences.

#RaceTalks #CultureTalks

Why You Shouldn't Avoid the Conversation

Whether you like it or not, RES is taking place, often in very subtle ways that significantly impact how your children feel and think about themselves and other races and ethnicities. It is a critical topic that is too often ignored or over-simplified.



When you avoid conversations about race and ethnicity:

- Children are more likely to incorrectly judge other groups.
- Children have little to no connection to their heritage.
- Children are more vulnerable to developing a negative self-concept.
- Children may not know how to respond to racially-charged experiences.

When you address conversations about race and ethnicity:

- Children are more respectful of other groups.
- Children will have a better understanding and appreciation for their own race, ethnicity and overall identity.
- Self-esteem is higher.
- Children can recognize and respond more appropriately to racially-charged situations.

#RESscenario

Your 4 year old African American daughter was bitten by another student because the student wanted to see if she tasted like chocolate. You laugh about the incident and say nothing to your child.

#RESistance

By not addressing the situation, you lose a valuable opportunity to teach your child that because of our different colors, people may make assumptions about who or what they are.

#RESolution

Discuss why the student would think your daughter tasted like chocolate. Explain that despite our different colors, we are all human beings and no person tastes like food. Discuss how best to respond to that situation.

Before You Start RES

Ask yourself:

- ⇒ What have I been taught about race and ethnicity?
- ⇒ Do I understand my feelings about my race and ethnicity?
- ⇒ What are the views about race and ethnicity in my home, family, neighborhood, and/or my child's school?
- ⇒ How have I been addressing race and ethnicity with my child and how does he/she respond?
- ⇒ How have my race-based experiences affected me?
- ⇒ What do I understand about race and ethnicity in my society?
- ⇒ What do I want my child to know about his/her race and ethnicity?

#PrepareYourself



Suggestions for Engaging in RES

It is never too early to start the RES process, BUT take note that different ages require different tactics. **#RESAcrossTheAges**

Very Young Children (Ages 3 to 5) are beginning to recognize the differences between themselves and other people. Caregivers should focus on acknowledging and celebrating differences.

Here are some activities you can do with your children:

- Read books about physical differences in skin, hair, eyes etc.
- Play music from your culture.
- Buy toys that look like your children.
- Watch movies with diverse characters.



Elementary Aged Children (Ages 6 to 11) are more in tune to racial and ethnic differences and are more likely to begin noticing differences in how certain racial and ethnic groups are treated.

Here are some activities you can do with your children:

- Read books highlighting the beauty of people who look like them. Also read books with main characters who look like them.
- Take trips to museums and other attractions that celebrate their culture or people of their race.
- Be open to answering questions about racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- Start talking about things going on in the news or at school.



Pre-Teens (Ages 12 to 13) are beginning to form and express opinions based on various racial and ethnic groups.

Here are some activities you can do with your children:

- Read books about historical figures and events involving people of your racial and ethnic background.
- Spend time teaching more about ethnic traditions such as cooking.
- Attend plays and other performances showcasing your culture.
- Get them involved in groups and activities related to your culture.
- Begin talking about some of the prejudices they may encounter as a result of their race or ethnicity.
- Role play race based scenarios.
- Emphasize respect of all persons regardless of race or ethnicity.
- Share some of your experiences in dealing with racism and discrimination.

Racial

Ethnic

Socialization

Involves

Love

Identity

Esteem

Nurturing

Culture

Endurance

We are united by the reality that all colors and all cultures are distinct & individual.

C. JoyBell C.

Teenagers (Ages 14 to 17) are better able to understand the details of racial and ethnic differences as well as society's handling of those differences. They struggle with making all of these working parts fit into a solid identity.

- Buy books about coming into your own and charting a path to success for your specific race or ethnic group.
- Have open dialogues about their musical preferences, the company they keep and their attitudes towards other groups.
- Have open dialogues about your experiences.
- Continue conversations about challenges they may face as a result of their race or ethnicity and how to handle them.

Young Adults (Ages 18 +)

- Continue having open conversations to prepare them to deal with any other race and ethnicity experiences they may face as they navigate young adulthood.
- Remain supportive as they learn how best to handle race and ethnicity based situations.

Anticipate Some Barriers

No matter how hard you work at instilling racial and cultural pride in your children, you will encounter road blocks.

They may be angry. They may ignore you. They may express that they wish they were another race.

Despite these reactions, you must not give up. Be patient, be open to their questions and be persistent. It is completely fine not to have all the answers and to sometimes say "I don't know".

Remember, it's a marathon, not a sprint. The important thing is to stay supportive, keep communication open and revisit the discussion.

#DoNotGiveUp

Additional Resources and Links

RES Virtual Center

<http://recastingrace.com/>

<http://www.embracerace.org/>

<http://criticalmediaproject.org/cml/topicbackground/race-ethnicity/>

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/08/talk-to-kids-about-race/>