

CENTER ON FATHERING

Fathering is For Life

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KIDS NEED DADS TOO
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Center on Fathering Monthly Newsletter--- January 2021

Talking to Your Kids About Racism Information compiled by Michael Sidwell and Supreet Mahanti, UNICEF



The way children understand the world evolves as they grow, but it's never too late to talk to them about equality and racism. Here are some age-appropriate ways to start that conversation and explain that racism is always wrong:

Under 5 years

At this age, children may notice and point out differences in people they see around them. As a parent, you can gently lay the foundation of their worldview. Use language that's age-appropriate and easy for them to understand.

- Recognize and celebrate differences – If your child asks about someone's skin color, you can use it as an opportunity to acknowledge that people do indeed look different, but to point out things we have in common. You could say, "We are all human, but we are all unique, isn't that amazing"!
- Be open – Make it clear that you're always open to your children's questions and encourage them to come to you with them. If your children point out people who look different – as young children can often do from curiosity – avoid shushing them or they will start to believe that it's a taboo topic.
- Use fairness – Children, especially those around 5, tend to understand the concept of fairness quite well. Talk about racism as unfair and unacceptable and that's why we need to work together to make it better.

6-11 years

Children this age are better at talking about their feelings and are eager for answers. They are also becoming more exposed to information they may find hard to process. Start by understanding what they know.

- Be curious – Listening and asking questions is the first step. For example, you can ask what they're hearing at school, on television and through social media.
- Discuss the media together – Social media and the internet may be one of your children's main sources of information. Show interest in what they are reading and the conversations they are having online. Find opportunities to explore examples of stereotypes and racial bias in the media, such as "Why are certain people depicted as villains while certain others are not?".
- Talk openly – Having honest and open discussions about racism, diversity and inclusivity builds trust with your children. It encourages them to come to you with questions and worries. If they see you as a trusted source of advice, they are likely to engage with you on this topic more.

12+ years

Teenagers can understand abstract concepts more clearly and express their views. They may know more than you think they do and have strong emotions on the topic. Try to understand how they feel and what they know, and keep the conversation going.

- Know what they know – Find out what your children know about racism and discrimination. What have they heard on the news, at school, from friends?
- Ask questions – Find opportunities such as events in the news for conversations with your children about racism. Ask what they think and introduce them to different perspectives to help expand their understanding.
- Encourage action – Being active on social media is important for many teenagers. Some may have begun to think about participating in online activism. Encourage them to do so as an active way to respond and engage with racial issues.

Celebrate diversity

Try to find ways to introduce your child to diverse cultures and people from different races and ethnicities. Such positive interactions with other racial and social groups early on help decrease prejudice and encourage more cross-group friendships.

You can also bring the outside world into your home. Explore food from other cultures, read their stories and watch their films.

Be conscious of racial bias in books and films and seek out ones that portray people from different racial and ethnic groups in varied roles. Consider stories that feature minority actors playing

complex or leading characters. This can go a long way in confronting racial and discriminatory stereotypes.

If your children are in school, find out from their teacher about how racism is covered in class and school rules and regulations to prevent and deal with it. Join parents' groups to share resources and concerns with teachers and school leadership.

Explore the past together to better understand the present. Historical events like the end of apartheid in South Africa, the civil rights movement in the United States and other movements for equality around the world remain symbols of a traumatic past that societies are still recovering from. Understanding them together can shine a light on how far we've come and how much further we still must go. These shared experiences can further help your child build trust and openness to different perspectives.

You are the example your child follows

Parents are children's introduction to the world. What they see you do is as important as what they hear you say.

Like language, prejudice is learned over time. In helping your child recognize and confront racial bias, you should first consider your own — does your friend circle or people you work with represent a diverse and inclusive group?

Take every opportunity to challenge racism, demonstrate kindness and stand up for every person's right to be treated with dignity and respect.

5 Ways to Stand Up Against Racism and Injustice by Sarah Ferguson, June 20, 2020, UNICEF

1. Listen to and amplify Black voices

Pay attention to the voices of people who experience racism every day. Share their stories with your friends and family.

2. Call out bigotry and hate speech

There has been a disturbing increase in hate speech in the U.S. in recent years. If you see something on social media or in the newspaper that reflects prejudice, leave a comment or write a letter to the editor to let others know that intolerant remarks are unkind and uncalled for.

If you overhear someone tell a racist joke, speak up and let them know that stereotyping isn't harmless. Let your children know they should feel free to speak up as well. There's nothing funny about using "humor" to normalize dangerous ideas and perpetuate ugly stereotypes.

3. Teach children about kindness, fairness and human rights

Prejudice and hate are not innate. They are learned behaviors — and they can be unlearned. Racism is a socially transmitted disease whose lifelong negative effects on the health and development of children and adolescents have been documented by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

So set a good example. Talk to your children regularly about differences and racism. Explain that racism is a system of unfairness and it has a long history in our country. Every human being has a right to feel safe and valued and to be treated fairly. If we want to fix the problem, we need to discuss it openly and be vigilant about it in our daily lives.

4. Stand up for people being harassed — intervene if it's safe to do so

If you see someone being harassed or physically attacked, it is important to help if you can do so safely. Make your presence as a witness known. Make eye contact with the person being attacked and ask if they want support. Don't escalate the situation.

When the public stands in solidarity, bigots lose their power. Verbal and physical abuse is wrong and should not be tolerated. All people deserve to be treated with dignity and humanity.

5. Support human rights organizations

How children are internalizing violence against people of color is a child rights issue. Systemic racism is a child rights issue. UNICEF has highlighted and advocated tirelessly for children's rights since its founding in 1946, and knows that all children deserve to grow up in a safe and healthy environment. Children who experience discrimination, racism and violence need our support now.

What Can Parents of the Victim Do? from <https://safe2tell.org/bullying-prevention-parents>

- Encourage your child to share his/her problems with you. Ensure him or her that this is not tattling. Know that your child may be embarrassed, ashamed, and fearful. Listen attentively and reassure him/her that he/she will not have to face the problem alone.
- Praise and encourage your child. Help him or her take pride in his/her accomplishments and differences. A confident child is less likely to be targeted by bullies.
- Search for talents and positive attributes that can be developed in your child. This may help a child to assert himself or herself.
- Help your child develop friendships. Stimulate your child to meet and interact with new peers. A new environment with new peers can provide a new chance for a victimized child.
- Encourage your child to make contact with calm and friendly children in his or her class (or in other classes). This may require the school's assistance.
- If your child's own behavior (i.e., provocative victim) is contributing to being bullied, try to help your child change his or her behavior without suggesting that he or she is responsible for being victimized. Try to help improve your child's social skills.

- Motivate your child to participate in physical activity or sports. Physical exercise can result in better physical coordination and less "body anxiety." This, in turn, can increase your child's self-esteem and improve peer relations.
- Maintain contact with your child's school. Keep a detailed record of bullying episodes and related communication with the school. Help develop a plan of action for the school to follow. Monitor the situation by maintaining communication with the school and your child.
- Seek help from a mental health professional.
- Make a report of bullying to Safe2Tell Colorado, a safe and anonymous way for you or your child to report threats, harmful behaviors, or dangerous situations.

What You Can Do (Legally) from FindLaw: <https://www.findlaw.com/education/student-conduct-and-discipline/what-to-do-if-your-child-is-bullied.html>

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to stop or prevent bullying from happening or re-occurring to your child. Legally, school officials must do all they reasonably can to help stop and prevent bullying they know (or should have known) about that results in serious mental or physical harm to a student. Otherwise, the school district can become legally responsible if it has not done anything to prevent or stop the offending behavior.

If your child is being bullied, you can take the following actions:

Become an active listener. It is extremely important that you talk with your child each day and ask open-ended questions throughout the school week. Often part of the challenge is getting your child to open up, so being an active listener will go a long way.

Make a complaint to the school. The next step is to contact your child's teacher, principal, or school administrators and explain the circumstances surrounding the initial behavior. Depending on the situation, it is important to put in writing the date, details, and nature of the incident(s).

Set limits with your child's activity online. Many kids are bullied or harassed on social media because other kids feel free to say or do things behind a screen that they would never do in person. Depending on your child's age, monitor your child's online activity and set appropriate limits on device usage.

Keep a detailed record of all accounts. It is also important that you keep detailed, accurate records of any additional incidents that occur, and the response received from the school. Be sure to include statements made by your child and any other potential witnesses, as well as an account of how your child felt emotionally.

Speak to the school's guidance counselor, if there is one. Ask whether the school has a contact person trained to deal with bullying and, if so, set up a meeting with them and your child.

Refer to the school's code of conduct to make sure the school is doing what it is required to do to prevent acts of violence, such as bullying. Many states have passed anti-bullying laws that require

districts and schools to have anti-bullying policies and processes for investigating and responding to bullying. Some state anti-bullying laws include civil rights provisions for bullying based on protected characteristics such as national origin or sexual orientation.

Seek legal advice from an attorney. Finally, if the school or district has not provided a reasonable solution, it may be necessary to speak with an attorney as soon as possible to get legal advice. Lawyers specializing in cases involving bullying can help victims and their families pursue legal claims against schools and/or parents who are not working to prevent the problem from occurring.

Can I Sue a School for Bullying?

It is possible to sue a school for bullying that the school knew or should have known about but failed to prevent if it resulted in serious harm to a child. However, it is not easy because most states have sovereign immunity laws that protect government entities from personal injury or tort claims. There are exceptions to these laws in all states. Negligence claims against school districts or teachers should be discussed with an experienced personal injury attorney who knows the state and federal laws that apply.

What to do if your child is a victim of a hate crime, or a witness a hate crime, in Colorado:

What is Hate Crime?

A hate crime is a threat or act of intimidation, harassment, or physical force that is motivated by bias against a person or group based on their actual or perceived: race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical or mental disability.

What does Colorado law say?

There are both federal and state laws that protect victims of hate crime. Colorado law breaks hate crime into two categories, "Bias motivated harassment" and "Bias-motivated crime."

If you feel your life or health is in immediate danger, call 911.

If the threat is not immediate, report the hate crime to any of the following law enforcement agencies in your area as soon as possible so that evidence can be preserved and witnesses can be interviewed:

Your local police or sheriff's department:

Your local District Attorney's Office:

For a map of districts and their contact information, see: <http://www.cdacweb.com>.

The local FBI office:

FBI Denver

8000 East 36th Avenue
Denver, CO 80238
<https://tips.fbi.gov/>
(303) 629-7171

Once you have reported to law enforcement, or if you are uncomfortable or unable to report the hate crime to law enforcement, the Anti-Defamation League in Colorado and the Southern Poverty Law Center collect information on hate crimes. They have simple online forms you can fill out.

To report a hate crime to the Anti-Defamation League, you can do so at this link:
<https://mountainstates.adl.org/contact/>

To report a hate crime to the Southern Poverty Law Center, you can do so at:
<https://www.splcenter.org/reporhate>

Ethnic Intimidation from the Colorado Judicial Branch webpage:

<https://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Education/Youth/Laws.cfm>

Ethnic intimidation occurs when a person knowingly (through words or by physical force) causes another person to fear that he/she or his/her property may be the target of an unlawful act because of his/her race, color, religion, ancestry, or national origin. Causing such fear is a class 1 misdemeanor. Causing actual damage to or destruction of the property of another person because of his/her race, color, religion, ancestry, or national origin is also a class 1 misdemeanor. Knowingly causing bodily injury to another person is a class 5 felony (18-9-121). Victims of ethnic intimidation, or members of their immediate families, are also entitled to collect damages from any person, organization, or association that commits the offense of ethnic intimidation. This person, organization, or association is civilly liable to the victim action (13-21-106.5).



MONTHLY ACTIVITIES (free)



Lowe's Build and Grow- Triceratops Kit. This kit is awesome! Your child will roar with delight when they build this cool Triceratops! Space is limited, so register today! Reserved kits can be picked up in-store at our customer service desk on Saturday, January 9th or Sunday, January 10th. If your kit is not picked up by 8 p.m. on Sunday, January 10th, it may be given to a non-registered customer. Go to: <https://diy.lowes.com/> and select DY Workshops to find an event near your location.



Space Foundation Discovery Center Virtual Experiences- Join the Space Foundation Discovery Center for great virtual content that you and your family can experience from the comfort of your own home! The Space Foundation Discovery Center invites everyone to continue to engage with us through virtual tours, dynamic multimedia content and other inspirational educational programs and activities, as well as through our social media channels at Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Activities and experiences include: Downloadable videos, downloadable lesson plans, upcoming live webinars, science on a sphere webcast and a tour of the Discovery Center. Free. Free. Contact: (719) 576-8000.



Dragon Theatre Productions Virtual Performances- Dragon Theatre is a program of Imagination Celebration which welcomes performers of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds who can make the rehearsal commitment. They've put videos of some of their productions online to share with the world their amazing talent. Free. Go to: <https://vimeo.com/channels/dragontheatreproductions>

WHAT'S NEW?

Center on Fathering New Classroom Photos

If you have been following our newsletters you probably know that the Center is moving to the Citizen's Service Center on Garden of the Gods. Construction is almost finished, and our new area is looking good!



MEET OUR STAFF

Susan Burt-Supervisor



Hello, I am Susan Burt. I have worked for the El Paso County Department of Human Services since 2002. I have been in the role of caseworker and now supervisor for the Center on Fathering starting in 2008. But in the past, I was part of the practice team with experience in Adolescent Intake, Family Treatment Drug Court and Ongoing Child Protection casework and supervision. My passion is to support children and families to achieve healthy relationships. I have a bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling Psychology from Edgewood College and attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin Madison in the area of Behavior Disabilities/ Rehabilitation Counseling. My prior work experience includes substance

abuse treatment and behavioral programming for individuals with developmental disabilities. I developed and directed residential and vocational/day services programs for adults with developmental disabilities for 21 years prior to coming to EPCDHS. When not working, I spend time with my adult daughters, grandson and my Corgi, Oliver. I enjoy singing in choirs, sewing, cooking, kayaking and camping. Please stop in and visit us in the new space on the third floor of the Citizens Services Center.

Janet Durkin-Administrative Assistant



I am the administrative assistant for the Center on Fathering. I have been working at the Center for about 14 years. I am the first face you see when you come into our offices. I also answer phones, do all sorts of paperwork, make appointments, etc. In my role, I keep track of all the records and my



coworkers. If you need information or want to track someone down, I can help. I work part time, and am an early riser, so you will likely catch me in the office early in the day. In my private life, I am an artist and a cat lady. I feed squirrels, war with raccoons, and hide from visiting bears who want to join my neighborhood.

Dawna Braswell-Case Worker



I have been employed at the Center on Fathering for 3 years. Having the opportunity to improve the lives of children warms my soul. I am a second-generation Colorado Springs native. Although I love traveling to other destinations, Colorado and its purple mountain majesty will always be called home. I am a dance mom and a dog mom. Both keep me active physically and emotionally and perfectly balance out my life.

Gary Grambort-Case Worker



After retiring from the Army in 1997, I began my career of working with fathers as a Case Manager with El Paso County Child Support's Parent Opportunity Program. It was there that my passion for helping fathers developed. In March 2013 I left the program to work with Center on Fathering. As a Case Worker for the Center, my duties include facilitating our Fathering Class, Nurturing Fathers class, InsideOut Dads Class and Conflict resolution, editing our monthly newsletter and our Legacy Project. I'm certified in Nurturing Fathers, InsideOut Dads, and mediation. I'm a graduate from the University of Wisconsin and majored in Psychology and Secondary Education. My wife Tammy and I have two sons and two grandsons. My hobbies include hot rods, Harleys,

working on my home and classic rock. One thing you would never guess about me is that as a young Marine, I studied Karate and entered several tournaments as a brown belt while stationed at Kaneohe Bay, HI.

Oliver-Susan's Dog



I enjoy sleeping, eating, stealing gumdrops and barking during Susan's web meetings. I am currently training to become a therapy dog. One thing you never guess about me is I get along with Ellie, Susan's cat.

Sydney Woody-Case Worker



I began working for the Center on Fathering in June of 2020, after moving to Colorado from Missouri, my home state. Thus far, my focus at the Center has been facilitating the fathering classes, working with the Responsible Parenting Program through the courts, and partnering with child welfare to better support incarcerated parents. I was born and raised in the capital city of Missouri, Jefferson City, but also lived in Columbia for several years. I attended college at the University of Missouri for my undergraduate degrees and Stephens College for some graduate work in Counseling. My educational background has included some work with the LGBTQ+ community, and particularly individuals who identify as transgender. I also previously worked

as a caseworker for individuals with developmental disabilities with the State of Missouri before starting at the Center. In my personal life, I enjoy reading, playing video games, gardening, and making art (sculpting, painting, etc.). My husband and I recently celebrated our first year of marriage, and we are currently living with our house full of kitties (seriously, there are six of them). Some other fun facts about me: I love all things purple, I speak Spanish, and I am twin.

Sarah Locklear-Case Worker



Sarah Locklear has been with the Center on Fathering for one and a half years. She has served in the Army and interned in the military unit while obtaining her BSW. She recently completed her MSW with CSU Pueblo. In addition to her work with COF she facilitates Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction with El Paso County Sherriff's Department and teaches in the Social Work Department at Pikes Peak Community College. In her time off she enjoys performing stand-up comedy, crafty stuff, and spending time with her five children.

DAD'S TIPS

RESOURCES FOR TALKING ABOUT RACE, RACISM AND RACIALIZED VIOLENCE WITH KIDS from the Center for Racial Justice in Education

Interviews/Advice from Experts:

“Talking to Children after Racial Incidents” from the Penn GSE Newsroom:
<https://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/talking-children-after-racial-incidents>

“Supporting Kids Of Color In Wake Of Racialized Violence” from EmbraceRace:
<https://soundcloud.com/user-551505264/supporting-kids-of-color-in-wake-of-racialized-violence>

“Tips for Parents on Media Coverage” from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network:
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/tips-parents-media-coverage-stabbing>

“Talking to Children about the Shooting” from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network:
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/talking-children-about-shooting>

An Activity Book For African American Families: “Helping Children Cope with Crisis” from the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD):
<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/product/390>

“Talking to kids about discrimination”, American Psychological Association:
<https://www.apa.org/topics/kids-discrimination>

“What White Children Need to Know About Race”, Ali Michael and Eleonora Bartoli:
<https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/summer-2014/what-white-children-need-to-know-about-race/>

“Talking to Kids about Racial Stereotypes” – Tip Sheet, Media Smarts:
https://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/pdfs/tipsheet/TipSheet_TalkingKidsRacialStereotypes.pdf

Resource Lists:

“Resources for Discussing Police Violence, Race, and Racism With Students” by Evie Blad:
<https://mobile.edweek.org/c.jsp?cid=25920011&item=http%3A%2F%2Fapi.edweek.org%2Fv1%2Fblog%2F147%2F%3Fuuid%3D59168&cmp=soc-edit-tw>

“Teaching About Race, Racism and Police Violence” from Teaching Tolerance:
<https://www.tolerance.org/moment/racism-and-police-violence>

“100 Race-Conscious Things you can Say to your Child to Advance Racial Justice” from Raising Race Conscious Children: <http://www.raceconscious.org/2016/06/100-race-conscious-things-to-say-to-your-child-to-advance-racial-justice/>

“Talking to Kids About Racism and Justice: a list for parents, caregivers & educators from the Oakland Public Library:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s0ICA3FluIVhK6DFE2d3uYCipc6ApY8Gn2rMwm6fYqw/edit>

“Resources for Educators Focusing on Anti-Racist Learning and Teaching” from the Early Childhood Education Assembly: <https://www.earlychildhoodeducationassembly.com/resources-for-educators-focusing-on-anti-racist-learning-and-teaching.html>

“A Collection of Resources for Teaching Social Justice”, Jennifer Gonzalez:
<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/social-justice-resources/>

“60+ Resources for Talking to Kids About Racism”, Lorien Van Ness:
<https://bouncebackparenting.com/resources-for-talking-to-kids-about-race-and-racism/>

“Talking About Racism And Bias: Resources For Parents And Caregivers”, Children’s Alliance:
<https://childrensalliance.org/resource/talking-about-racism-resources-parents-and-caregivers>

“Racial Justice Resources for Families”, Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ:
<https://www.sneucc.org/racial-justice-resources-for-families>

“Talking to Children About Race and Ethnicity”, Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences:
<https://modules.ilabs.uw.edu/module/racing-towards-equality-why-talking-to-your-kids-about-race-is-good-for-everyone/talking-to-children-about-race-and-ethnicity/>

