

They're not too young to talk about race!



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At birth, babies look equally at faces of all races. At 3 months, babies look more at faces that match the race of their caregivers. (Kelly et al. 2005)

Children as young as two years use race to reason about people's behaviors. (Hirschfeld, 2008)

By 30 months, most children use race to choose playmates. (Katz & Kofkin, 1997)

Expressions of racial prejudice often peak at ages 4 and 5. (Aboud, 2008)

By five, Black and Latinx children in research settings show no preference toward their own groups compared to Whites; White children at this age remain strongly biased in favor of whiteness. (Dunham et al, 2008)

By kindergarten, children show many of the same racial attitudes that adults in our culture hold—they have already learned to associate some groups with higher status than others. (Kinzler, 2016)

Explicit conversations with 5–7 year olds about interracial friendship can dramatically improve their racial attitudes in as little as a single week. (Bronson & Merryman, 2009)

Young children notice and think about race. Adults often worry that talking about race will encourage racial bias in children, but the opposite is true. **Silence about race reinforces racism** by letting children draw their own conclusions based on what they see. Teachers and families can play a powerful role in helping children of all ages develop positive attitudes about race and diversity and skills to promote a more just future—but only if we talk about it!

Do some learning of your own to get ready for conversations with children. Here are some good places to seek *information* and *training*:

- Teaching Tolerance — tolerance.org
- Raising Race Conscious Children — raceconscious.org
- Embrace Race — embracerace.org
- Teaching for Change — teachingforchange.org
- AORTA Cooperative — aorta.coop
- Fortify Community Health (CA) — fortifycommunityhealth@gmail.com
- Delaware Valley Assoc. for the Education of Young Children (PA) — dvaevc.org



How White Parents Can Talk To Their Kids About Race

Here's an age-by-age guide for white parents to addressing racism and privilege with their children.

By Caroline Bologna

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White parents can and should begin addressing issues of race and racism early, even before their children can speak. Studies have indicated that infants as young as 3 months old can recognize racial differences. Avoiding the topic, rather than actively countering it with anti-racist attitudes and actions, simply opens the door for children to absorb bias from the world around them.

Ages 0-2

Babies are born as blank slates when it comes to perceptions of race, but that changes very quickly.

“Research has taught us that infants recognize differences in skin color. To believe that babies are colorblind is not based in fact,” Hollier explained.

By 3 months of age, babies can categorize people according to race and spend more time gazing at faces that match the race or races of their primary caregivers. As their brains develop, their understanding of the world stems from what they observe in their parents and others around them. Thus, it’s important for caregivers to model inclusivity and unbiased conduct.

What White Children Need to Know About Race

Summer 2014

By Ali Michael and Eleonora Bartoli



Race is an essential part of one's identity. Being white may have little meaning to some whites, but that does not mean it has no meaning. All white people are white in the context of a society that continues to disadvantage people of color based on race. Being white, in essence, means not having to deal with those disadvantages and therefore not having to notice them. Schools can help foster awareness about the meaning of whiteness by helping white students develop a positive racial identity, which requires an understanding of systemic racism. While students may need to be reassured that they did not ask to be white, or for any of the advantages that might come with it, they should also know that the reality in which they are embedded ascribes unearned privileges to their whiteness. It is through seeing themselves in a larger racialized context that white people can begin to understand how they can work to change racism — and change what it means to be white.

Create a positive white identity that allows white students to move toward it. In her book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* Beverly Daniel Tatum suggests that, in the traditional context of race, there are only three ways to be white: ignorant, color-blind, and racist. With options like these, she asks, who would choose to identify with their whiteness? She suggests that we have to create a fourth way to be white: the antiracist white identity. Schools need to create spaces in which students can identify as white and simultaneously work against racism. Whites have choices regarding how to use the privilege that comes from being white. All of the above considerations as well as content knowledge below can foster an antiracist white identity.

to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another.

So, what is **Systemic Racism**?

