



RACE: Turning to Learning

Learning about race and racism is a process, and responding to racism is a skill that must be learned. Parents in a transracial family might start out thinking that they can protect their child inside the family bubble, and that it doesn't matter how the rest of the world thinks about race, but racism is a fact of life and a part of human history. It is embedded in our culture. When you take on the role of a parent in a transracial family, it is important to become more racially aware. Understanding racism in its many forms makes you a better advocate for your child, and makes you a better parent.

- **Learn about racism**
- **Interrupt racism and respond effectively**

● Learn about racism

- **Become familiar with the topic**

Explore media that focus on racial issues such as books, documentaries, magazines and journals to help you develop an understanding of race and racism—both historically and currently. This knowledge is the foundation of your ability to recognize racism.

- **Recognize that not all racism is overt**

Not all racism is overt, much of it is subtle. It is common for us to think of racism as violent and extreme as we think of the past. While the history of racism is something that we must learn from and never forget, the reality in the United States today is that people of color are more likely to face racism that is subtle or “covert,” not violent or outwardly hostile. Yet it still has a malevolent effect on people's lives and our society as a whole. Covert racism is perpetrated by individuals and by institutions. It can be hard to recognize by both the victims and the perpetrators.

Examples of covert racism:

Being ignored

Being ridiculed

Being treated differently

- **Discuss race issues**

Talk with your children; make discussions about race and racism part of your family life. This will help you and your children become comfortable talking about the topic and processing it.

- **Seek experts and allies**

Seek out experts and knowledgeable allies to help you learn more. Join anti-racist networks of diverse families, multicultural communities, and organizations.



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● Interrupt racism and respond effectively

Interrupting and responding to racism means that you recognize it and take action to oppose it. All of these reactions model appropriate responses that will help you keep a level head, whether your child is present or not. Interrupting racism doesn't make it go away. Talk to your child and talk to others, and don't be afraid to ask questions and admit that you are still learning too.

- **Educating (at the moment)**

When someone says something that is unintentionally offensive, this is a great time to educate.

- **Advocacy (continual)**

Sometimes after educating a person, you may want to invite them to get involved. This way they can learn more and perhaps make an impact.

- **Walking away**

In some cases you may feel that the comment is intended to draw you into a confrontation in front of your child or may lead to a dangerous situation. In these cases it is best to walk away or to avoid the interaction in a respectful way.

