

# PARENT TALK

## Tips of the week from Judge Baker Children's Center

We hear you. Getting through the week without school and our usual routines is just as tough for parents as it is for kids. **Judge Baker Children's Center** is here for you with helpful advice from our expert clinicians...and you, our parents!

### Tip of the Week from our Clinician

## TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT RACISM

*HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT RACIAL INJUSTICE AND THE NATIONWIDE PROTESTS*

### KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

#### TALK



Let your child know you're open to having a discussion and will listen to whatever they are thinking. Most children, beginning from a very young age, are aware of racial differences and may already have access to information and images they see on the TV, internet, social media, and other platforms. It's important to start the conversation.

#### FACTS

Use age-appropriate and factual information when talking about race and violence. Find out the information your child knows. Explore if it's based on facts, not fears, and that it's appropriate for their developmental stage.



#### LISTEN

Give your child the space to ask questions and talk about their feelings. Talk about how they feel about the information they have. Validate their emotions and experiences. Communicate that you love and accept them no matter what they're feeling or thinking.



#### MODEL

Model appropriate ways of expressing emotion. Discuss ways we can become more inclusive and accepting. Keep the conversation open, so your child feels comfortable coming to you if they have additional questions, concerns, or feelings.



**BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR OTHER RESOURCES TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION.**

This is a challenging time for everyone. Please know that you don't need to do it alone. If you or your child is struggling, we encourage you to schedule an appointment or join a parent support group at our Center for Effective Child Therapy. Contact us [here](#).

## Parent Tip of the Week

Phebe is a mom to 2-year-old Genevieve. Phebe's parenting is based on the belief that children can develop empathy, compassion, love and a sense of justice if we teach them. John and Cynthia are parents to 10-year-old Kenzie and are firm believers in talking openly with their daughter about racial justice in order to create a better future.

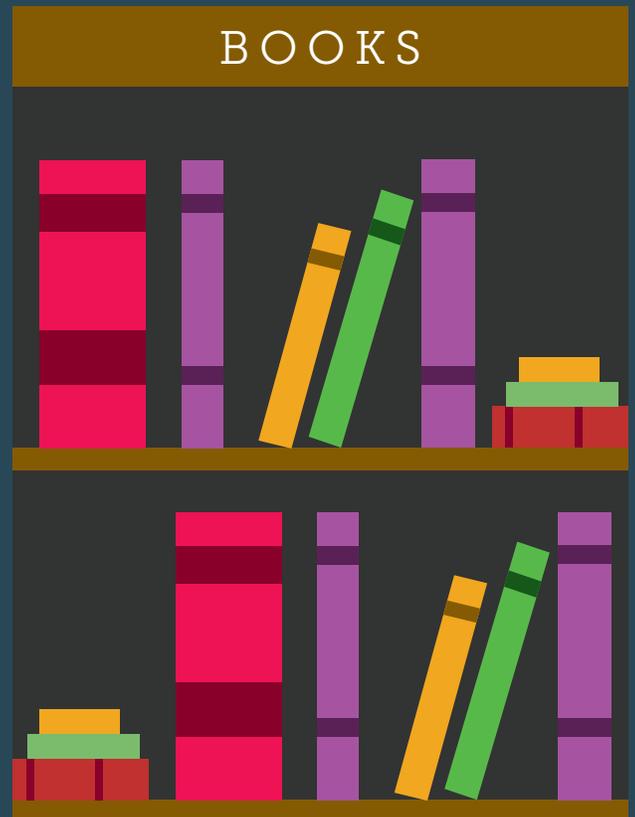
Phebe has already started these conversations with Genevieve. "Racism is a real thing and needs to be talked about often, early, and honestly. **Toddlers begin to classify people, and it is important for them to recognize and appreciate how different we all are.**" She talks about the beauty of our differences, explaining how boring it would be without all of our different skin tones, languages and cultures in the world.

Phebe expressed the importance of not instilling fear when speaking about protests. She told *Parent Talk*: "**Explain to your child why people are protesting - and although it sometimes can get violent, it usually does not. Use examples from American history to show how protesting, rioting, and movements brought forth positive change.**"

John and Cynthia regularly talk to Kenzie about racial injustice, telling her that, "People are protesting because police have treated people who don't have white skin unfairly." Before attending a protest, John explains how this is one way to show up for others when injustice is taking place.

Phebe also tries to avoid teaching color blindness. "Color blindness ignores racial injustice, limits our ability to see individuality, and minimizes the issues facing people of color. Expose children to diverse TV shows, toys, music and movies, making sure to consider a wide variety of skin colors, language and people. Talk to them about it as you watch or play with them. Surround them with children of many races." Like Phebe, Cynthia recommends pointing out to your child when stereotypes or injustices take place in TV, books, popular culture, and real life. "Explain to children when something isn't OK, so that they know! It is our responsibility as parents to have these conversations with our children." From an early age, Kenzie's bookshelves have included books with diverse protagonists. "**We read her stories about kids from many different cultures, and buy her books with strong social activism themes. It is important that children hear stories by a multitude of protagonists from different racial and cultural backgrounds.**"

Click [here](#) for The New York Times's List of Anti-Racist Books for Kids.



The best tips are the ones that work! We'd love to hear from you about what is working for your child and family. Please email your ideas to [Cassie Poirier](#) so we can share them with other parents and caregivers.

Phebe reminded *Parent Talk* that the conversations parents have based on their own race are going to be very different. **"For most black families, conversations about racial injustice are not a choice. For other races, and especially white families, we must have these conversations, including about white privilege, with our kids if things are going to change."** Some examples of white privilege that Phebe talks about with Genevieve include "skin color" in a coloring box, band aids all being a lighter tone, and why most Disney princesses are white. Talking openly about this allows your child to see how people are treated differently because of their skin color. Phebe ended her interview saying, "Talk to your kids and listen to them. It is a scary time, but it is so important that we don't instill fear about what is going on or stay quiet about it. **All we can do is listen, explain, be honest and provide them the support to not form any hateful ideas about other people based on their skin color.**"

We want to thank Phebe, John, and Cynthia so much for sharing these tips with us.

## Resource Highlight

This week's resource highlight comes from an interview with Howard Stevenson, a clinical psychologist with a focus on racial trauma at Penn University Graduate School of Education.

## Tip of the week

"Monitor your child's emotions before, during, and after the conversation. Say, 'This is an ongoing conversation.' You're going to keep talking about these issues and they should, too. When another incident makes headlines, follow up."

[Click here to read the full interview.](#)