

# TIP SHEET FOR TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT RACIAL INJUSTICE AND PROTESTS

*("BEEP-K" for the initial of each tip)*

## BUILD EMPATHY

- It's OKAY to show emotion. In doing so, you will be able to normalize and validate the feelings your child may already be feeling.
- State that all people are deserving of safety and respect.
- Explain that many people are angry, fearful, hurt, and grieving because Black people are being hurt by some police officers.
- Validate their own feelings, such as confusion or fear regarding current events.

## EXPLAIN THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

- Explain that protesting is a way of expressing feelings, asking for help, and demanding changes to make the communities feel safer AND it's protected by the U.S. Constitution.
- "How does your body feel when you are angry? Sad? Scared?"
- Remind your child that violence by police and protesters is not correct and explore ways in which feelings can be expressed without violence.

## EMPHASIZE HOW WRONG RACISM AND PREJUDICE ARE

- Children are raised to think that when you do something bad there is going to be a consequence. If children are constantly hearing and seeing that black people are being targeted and killed, the idea is that they have done something wrong and they are bad.
- The tone of the conversation needs to be, "This is wrong. We don't agree with this."

## PROVIDE HOPE

- Affirm that many people are working towards change for things to be fair and safe for everyone.
- Explore ways in which your child and you can participate in positive change (learning/ sticking up for others/having friends from different backgrounds)

## KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING!

- Bring up examples that you encounter whether in the community, news, movies, cartoons, music.
- Silence about racial injustice, reinforces racism. The more you talk about it, the more it builds consciousness, and the more comfortable your child will feel in bringing it up.
- Ask questions. What do they know about recent events? Why do they think is happening? What do these events mean to them?
- Keep conversations age-appropriate. Some children may lack the vocabulary to discuss such topics since they may not have been given opportunities to discuss racial injustice.
- Follow the child's lead and answer any questions they may have. It is important to not dismiss any questions the child may have.
- Use race-conscious language: be purposeful and intentional about talking about race. Use terms like "white" and "black" instead of vague concepts like "some people hurt others." Practicing color blindness can confuse children and sends the message that they are not supposed to talk about race.

## RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS:

### BOOKS

- "Daddy Why Am I Brown?": A healthy conversation about skin color and family. – Bedford Palmer
- "The Colors of Us" – Karen Katz
- "Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" – Beverly Daniel Tatum
- [Talking to Kids about Racism and Justice - Oakland Library Book Recommendations](#)

### ARTICLES AND WEBSITES

- [Racism and Violence: How to Help Kids Handle the News | Child Mind Institute](#)
- [Anti-racism Project](#)
- [Facing History and Ourselves](#)

### REFERENCES

- [Talking With Children About Racism, Police Brutality and Protests | Aha! Parenting](#)
- [Racism and Violence: Using Your Power as a Parent to Support Children Aged Two to Five | Zero to Three](#)
- [Talking to Children About Racial Bias | HealthyChildren.org](#)
- [How to Talk to Your Kids About Injustice, Racism, and Protests | Healthline](#)

Find more resources for mental health at [www.CatholicCharities.org/counseling](http://www.CatholicCharities.org/counseling).