

# Tips For Talking To Your Kids About Social Justice 001

## *From Abundant Activism*

We know talking to your kiddos about Social Justice can be hard when you first start, and especially without community support! Below are some tips and tricks for getting started (note that we use these strategies with infants to tweens, with age-appropriate language, of course!):

1. Don't be afraid to be honest with your kids! They are capable of understanding and processing more than most people give kids credit for. The earlier you start to introduce big words like "White Supremacy" the easier it will be for your family to tackle the deeper meanings as kids become ready.
2. Do personal work, and share that process and experience with your kids.
  - a. For example, notice your own biases out loud with your kids. It might feel scary to name your biases, especially to your kids, but setting the example of being self-reflective is part of the work!
  - b. For young white kids, under 3 years old: take them to parks where they will be around more kids of color (ex: Mosswood, City Slicker Farms).
3. Spend time as a family learning about your ancestry and family history - the good and the bad! It's important to balance a feeling of connection and love to your ancestors, as well as being honest and critical about the negative parts of your family history.
4. Monitor media consumption.
  - a. For older kids: have them watch or listen to the news with you. Engage with them about what they are hearing - how does it make them feel? Is is something they have learned about before?
5. Choose books wisely, and use them as a springboard.
  - a. Make sure you have culturally diverse books with kids of different races/cultures, family structures, abilities, and genders in the books you have at home.
  - b. When reading books aloud, slyly change the gender/pronouns of the main kid(s), or their parents!
  - c. For older kids: read aloud autobiographies, or books with more difficult topics, and find teachable moments.
6. Watch your language!
  - a. Notice race - it's ok to use color when describing people! Teaching kids color blindness is detrimental to their understanding of their own identity.
  - b. Instead of just telling kids not to curse, explain why don't we say things like, "Fuck" "That's so gay" or "I'm so retarded" or "Ugg I look so fat in this".
  - c. Notice how you talk about other kids and families around your kids - are you using the pronouns that kid has asked for people to use? Are you shaming someone for their way of living, or for being too active?
7. The Police & Good/Bad kids
  - a. Encourage complex conversation about who are "good" and "bad" guys
    - i. Don't call other kids bad, and notice when black boys are being targeted for being bad
  - b. Encourage kids to reimagine and help them complicate police and jail games (ex: instead, freedom fighters breaking people out of jail!).
  - c. Do not call the police - Write down Emergency Numbers (ex: crisis help lines)
  - d. For older kids: talk critically about the ramifications of calling the police, specifically on black and brown families
8. Let your kid be gender-expansive - ask them what pronouns they like to use that day! We think it is especially important to allow and encourage boys to be fancy. Here are a couple other tips about gender:
  - a. Watch how you gender things, and teach your kid to use gender neutral "they" for kids who haven't told you their pronouns
  - b. Counter strangers' comments that gender people incorrectly or not inclusively (Ex: "OK boys and girls!")

- c. Notice public bathrooms with your kids - who can use them and who can't?
9. Homelessness
- a. Engage with your kids about why so many homeless folks are black and brown.
  - b. Notice how do you treat/engage with homeless folks daily, and know that it will deeply affect your kids respect for people living on the streets.
10. Engage kids directly with Freedom Fighters!
- a. Have Freedom Fighter birthday parties!
  - b. Go to actions and find ways for children to be meaningfully engaged in your area's activist community (Ex: Abundant Beginnings' Teach-Ins, Boomshake Music, SURJ Youth and Families,)
  - c. For older kids: read aloud Freedom Fighter autobiographies (ex: Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, Malcolm X, Elaine Brown)