

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO BLACK LIVES MATTER



**Resources, Activities, and Tips for
Families to empower children to work
towards racial equality**

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A QUICK INTRODUCTION

Peaceful protests, mass marches, and portrayals of violence. Petitions, political speeches, and demonstrations. The last few months have seen movements advocating for an end to racial inequality on a mass scale. Yet, current affairs aren't always tangible or immediately clear, especially from a child's perspective.

Many children may have questions about the images, stories, and conversations they hear on the news and around them.

As parents, if we haven't already, it is our responsibility to engage in positive and open discussions about race and racism with our children at home.



WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

Perhaps race has always been a topic of regular discussion in your family, or perhaps you feel unsure about how to approach the topic of race with your family. Perhaps you grew up never talking about race, or perhaps you regularly face discrimination. This guide aims to provide **resources, advice, and tips** to ensure everyone is aware of **racial inequality** present in modern-day society, as well as to share tools and knowledge to **combat racism today**.

This guide is **all-inclusive**, aimed at people of all races and backgrounds, whether you have no knowledge of anti-racism movements or you've already read a lot about it.

If you haven't got kids, not to worry: whilst our guide includes child-friendly analogies and resources, the content is inclusive material for both parents and non-parents alike, for bettering our understanding or helping to explain the movement to others.

Racism and race is not a one-conversation topic, and our guide by no means contains all the answers. We simply hope to provide the **foundations** of a good place to start, to help **inspire discussion** and **empower us** to work towards **racial equality** in our immediate sphere of influence.



WHAT IS THE BLACK LIVES MATTER (BLM) MOVEMENT?

In 2012, 17-year old African-American Trayvon Martin was killed by a member of neighbourhood watch, George Zimmerman. The police told Zimmerman not to pursue Trayvon for looking suspicious, but he didn't listen and fatally shot him. There was a lot of racial bias during the trial and Zimmerman was acquitted for the crime.

In response, the Black Lives Matter movement was formed.

The organisation, Black Lives Matter, seeks to “**eradicate white supremacy, stop violence inflicted on Black communities, and create a safe space for Black communities, imagination, and innovation.**” Whilst Black Lives Matter is not a new movement, its message is central to the present anti-racist movement in response to the death of George Floyd. The movement speaks out against police brutality and unaccountability, not solely with regard to George Floyd, but also Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the thousands of victims wrongly treated by the police.



You can find out more about the organisation and their aims on their [website](#).

Often it's tricky to distinguish between Black Lives Matter as a political organisation and the wider social message, as in many ways, both the **political and social movements overlap**. "Black Lives Matter" has expanded beyond the borders of the original organisation, and has now grown today into an **international human rights movement**, with the common goal of underscoring and combatting racism in modern-day society. It refers to a **social media hashtag, an anthem, a slogan, a social movement, or movements and groupings advocating for racial equality and justice**.

There are debates both inside and outside of the Black community when it comes to the movement's political stance on some issues, which differ by country and experience, but that doesn't mean that we can't support the **core principles** of the movement: **equality, justice and a safe, fair world for all to thrive in**. While the calls for impactful policy change become more visible, the core humanitarian message of BLM still stands.

But how do we explain all of this to our children?

There are so many layers to BLM it can be confusing where to start when explaining the movement to our children. Perhaps, one of the most important things to highlight is that when we explain BLM to children, **you're not saying that nobody else matters**. However, by encouraging statements such as 'all lives matter', we risk silencing or **undermining the specific difficulties felt by Black communities**.

There are many simple, child-friendly analogies to help us to understand the principle of the statement "Black Lives Matter":

1.) Imagine if you broke your leg and had to go to the Doctor. You would want to tell the Doctor that right now, your leg was in pain. **Whilst ALL your bones matter, right now, it's your leg that needs attention.**

2.) Imagine you were running a race to raise money at a cancer fundraiser, and someone said to you 'But don't all diseases matter?' **Of course they do, but right now, it's cancer that needs funding**



illustration credit: [Kris Straub](#)

These examples highlight the need to focus on one problem at a time in order to successfully solve it. While it's true that there are hundreds, if not thousands of issues affecting our society, solving global systemic racism can't be fixed by just a few people. **It requires everyone's involvement**, which is why the movement has spread far and wide.

Teenagers are more likely to understand the **political and social movement** in its complexity, and as parents we should create an **open space** which encourages healthy discussion and questions.

WE SAID: BLACK LIVES
MATTER

WE NEVER SAID: ONLY
BLACK LIVES MATTER

WE KNOW: THAT ALL
LIVES MATTER

WE JUST NEED YOUR HELP
WITH
#BLACKLIVESMATTER

FOR BLACK LIVES ARE IN
DANGER!



WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Children (8+) understand that humans are multidimensional beings, with lots of different things that make up who they are. Parts of our identity overlap, intersect and one part of our identity is not at war with another, both go hand in hand to make us who we are. **This can be summarised as the concept of intersectionality.**

For example, while Black Lives Matter seeks to combat the racism that is experienced by the Black community as a whole, it is true that Black women and Black men can sometimes experience racism differently. The same can be said with sexuality, class and religion, which can each overlap with race and each other to create unique systems of discrimination, privilege or disadvantage.

In order to be an effective ally with the movement and to fully comprehend how our children might experience or witness racism in their daily lives, we must not forget about how **intersectionality** plays a part in how individuals might be affected by racism. It's not a way to divide people further, but a way of ensuring that **everyone's needs and struggles are visible and able to be addressed.**



what is LGBTQ+?

LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

what's the link between LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter?

LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter intersect and overlap. Pride marches actually began with the Stonewall Riots against police brutality in 1969, predominantly led by LGBTQ+ people of colour – Storme DeLarverie, Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera.

As pride became a celebration, on the flipside, many black LGBTQ+ people, particularly transgender people, were **marginalised, violently discriminated against and made unwelcome in the LGBTQ+ community**. On top of this, their sexual and/or gender identity made them unwelcome and violently discriminated against in the Black community.

The founders of BLM are women, of whom two of three identify as LGBTQ+. They underscore that **all Black lives matter**, putting LGBTQ+ at the centre of the discussion. One of the central ambitions of the Black Lives Matter movement is to:

“affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum.”

To support Black Lives Matter means to support all Black lives, regardless of sexual identity, disability and gender. It is an affirmation and a reminder that you don't need to hide one part of your identity to celebrate, support and uplift another. Therefore, it is important that children are taught to be **accepting of communities that they may not be a part of outside of the parameters of race**, whilst also being aware that they sometimes interlink and have shared challenges.

HOW DO I EXPLAIN GEORGE FLOYD TO MY CHILDREN?

Perhaps, prior to the death of George Floyd, you viewed racism as something ‘*of the past*’ or ‘*something that doesn't happen here.*’ When talking about the tragedy of George Floyd and similar incidents, **it's important to emphasise that racism hasn't suddenly appeared from nowhere.**

For younger children:

Perhaps one of the questions children will have is ‘**Why now?**’. It's important to highlight that incidents of bad behaviour and mistreatment have happened regularly for decades, and no matter how many times people said ‘stop’ or asked for help, little was done. **George Floyd's death was the straw that broke the camel's back.**

Explaining the current events can be made comprehensible through a **child-friendly lens**. How would your child feel if their friend said something mean to them or pushed them because of something they couldn't control? What if they then did it again, even after your child asked them to stop? And then again, and no one at school helped them? Eventually, they would feel upset and angry. **In some ways, this is like the George Floyd tragedy.**





Younger children may find it difficult to understand police brutality, so it's important to explain that while police officers should be kind and helpful, this is not always the case.

This can also be a good time to teach children about **prejudice** and that we should **never judge a person's character by their physical appearance**. Often in our society, and consequently the policing system, there are presumptions of what a 'dangerous' person looks like, which has fuelled many of these acts of police brutality. We should remind our children that a person with a darker skin colour should not be associated with negative characteristics such as being dangerous or unkind, and that **we should never judge a book by its cover**.

For older children (secondary school):

With a greater understanding of the world and events around them, as parents, we can expand on the above to teach our children the history of race and racial injustice present in modern-day society. We should make sure our children understand that **the effects of the slave trade did not just stop at its abolition**, but that its effects are still seen and felt today by Black communities all over the world, and not just those in the USA.

It's important to know about current injustices, previous injustices, and cases in which people have bravely spoken out such as (but not limited to):

- 1.) Apartheid in the Republic of South Africa (RSA)
- 2.) Key figures such as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks
- 3.) Windrush in the UK
- 4.) The American Civil War
- 5.) Examples of everyday discrimination: eg.) CV responses with 'black' sounding names being less likely to be contacted, fashion industries prioritising white beauty, disproportionate stop and searches by the police
- 6.) Grenfell Tower Inquiry
- 7.) The role of Black soldiers in WWI and WWII & treatment post-war



For a better understanding of these topics yourself before approaching them with your children, we've linked a range of helpful resources at the end of this guide.

HOW DO I OPEN A CONVERSATION WITH CHILDREN ON RACE AND RACISM?

For some families, particularly White or non-Black people of colour, discussions on race and racial inequality may feel like fairly new territory. It can be easy to get used to not thinking about racial identity if it doesn't **personally impact us negatively during everyday life**.

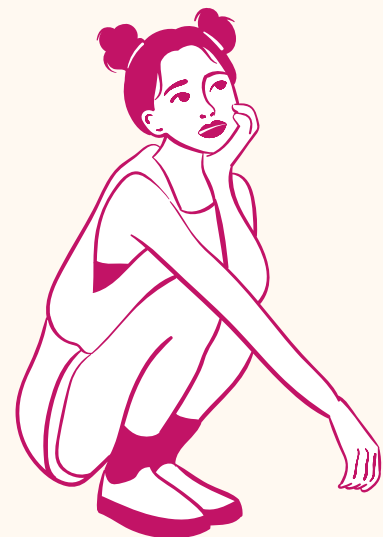
It's quite natural to feel uncomfortable as a parent when engaging in such discussions, especially when it's not a topic that you're used to talking about. As Ijeoma Oluo, the author of "So You Want to Talk About Race" tells us:

"If you're white, and you don't want to feel any of that pain by having these conversations, then you are asking people of colour to continue to bear the entire burden of racism alone."

"But won't talking about race cause more division?"

Often, we are so afraid of saying the 'wrong thing' that we don't engage at all. As a consequence, our children risk not learning about the **racism and existing prejudices today, how to be open to criticism or how to reshape their views**. We should all make an active effort to encourage discussion on race. If we immediately shut down our children's remarks or comments on race, we risk making it into a taboo topic. Avoid saying things like *"that's just life"* or *"that's the way the world works."* Rather, take the time to **listen to their thoughts**, and **explore the topic together**, it could also help you as a parent to learn new information or see things from a new perspective.

We can't solve a problem if we don't talk about it. Invite children to actively see colour, to see culture, to learn about history, and to acknowledge that race has an impact on people's life experiences.



So, how can we best do this and what can we say?

Younger children:

Explaining recent events and the deep complexities racism pose are understandably difficult to approach with younger children. How do we explain race and the racism that exists today in an age-appropriate manner?

A good first step is to frame race and its present inequalities through the lens of how a child experiences the world, such as **'fairness.'** From an early age, we hear our children say **'it's not fair.'** Highlighting examples of situations that **'are not fair'** and **'are fair'** is a tangible lens in which young children are able to better understand racial injustice. For example:

"If we went to the shop and I gave your little sister 5 sweets and only gave you 1, how would that make you feel?"

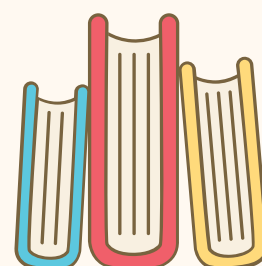
"If you were hungry and I made dinner for everyone but didn't give you any, do you think that is fair?"

"If you did something wrong and I punish you by taking away your favorite toy and your sister did the same thing and I gave her a treat... do you think that's fair?"

Use simple language and make it clear that you feel the treatment of George Floyd by a police officer was not fair, and that in our family we think everyone should be treated fairly. Personalising your explanation will help make it more tangible, and if you can relate the discussion either to yourselves, your children's friends or your own family members and friends, it can help to **bring these topics closer to home to highlight their importance.**

Children absorb their surroundings from a young age, therefore as parents, we can also actively expose our children to **diverse books, films, cartoons, and music** to ensure our children do not associate influential heroes, the most 'beautiful' characters, or the loudest voices as solely White.

Some examples can be found in the resource section of our guide.



Older children (10+):

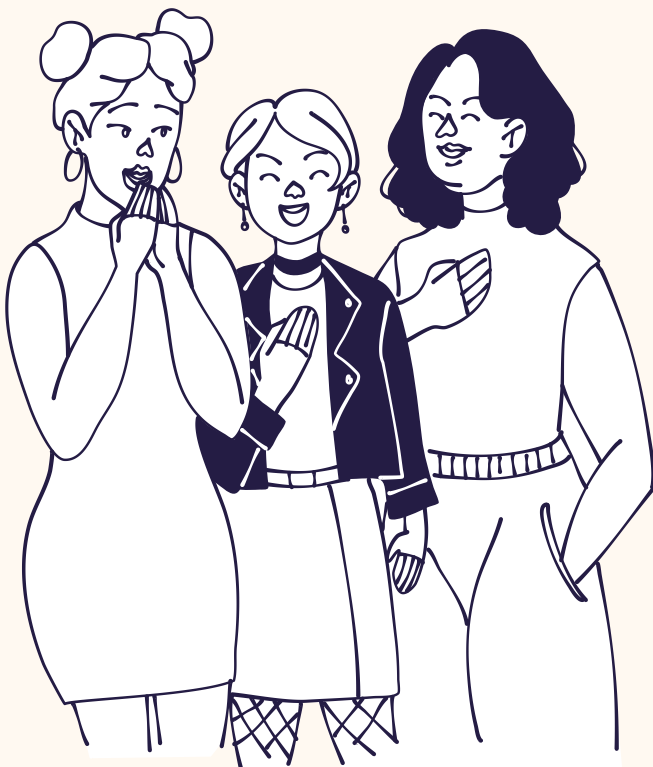
Most older children have an awareness of what is going on in the world around them. As parents we should, therefore, allow our children to lead the conversation by providing a **safe and comfortable environment in which they are able to express themselves.**

Ask your children questions:

What do they know about race?

Have they witnessed racism or ever been mean to someone with different skin colour?

What is their interpretation and opinion of recent events?



The case of Shukri Abdi highlights that racial bullying is still present, and as parents, we should take the time to understand the behaviour of our own children. There is a good chance that children pick up on other children's ideas / behaviours that we aren't always aware of, and often those will be the ideas they stick with unless children can openly discuss and process them!

By listening to what our children know, we can then build on their conversation and help fill the more difficult or challenging gaps.

Providing our children with resources from the Black Community – books, film, podcasts, music etc – is also a great way to start (see the resources section at the end of this guide).

SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE GEORGE FLOYD, HOW DO I KEEP MY CHILDREN UP TO DATE WITHOUT OVERWHELMING THEM?

So much has happened since the death of George Floyd, it is sometimes tricky to keep up with the latest news and **keep the momentum** going behind the Black Lives Matter movement.

For many of us, 2020 has opened our eyes to **racism present in different levels of society**. Our dedication to ending racism is not a one-day job, but a lifelong commitment to better educate ourselves and stand up to racism.

The Every Mom highlights: *“In any big revolution, there always comes a moment when people get tired. Tired of hearing about it, tired of seeing it everywhere, tired of talking about it. Well, I’m tired of living it, and Black people can’t fight this revolution alone. We’ve been fighting this fight and asking for our lives to matter for decades and we are just now being heard in 2020.”*

It's therefore important that we don't switch off, but find a healthy balance to incorporate our commitment to ending racism into everyday life. No one is asking you to become an expert on the entirety of the Black Lives Matter movement overnight. **Start small by looking inwards and reflecting on how simple actions and behaviour can contribute to positive change.**

It may at times feel depressing or overwhelming to read in the news of another Black person wrongly killed by the police or fallen victim to hate crimes. When keeping your children informed of recent events, it's important for them to know that **the fight is not over**, but you can also emphasise on the wins and signs that **positive change** is happening.

For example: large companies updating their branding to no longer have racist connotations (eg. Uncle Bens), new and creative initiatives to support Black communities, successful Black sportspeople and politicians winning competitions and elections that have previously lacked diversity...

It can help us and our children to feel empowered, that all is not lost and that their actions are having a small, but positive impact in the direction our society is going.



A COUPLE OF TALKING POINTS SINCE GEORGE FLOYD:

Statues:

Perhaps one of the biggest debates to arise in the UK from the Black Lives Matter Movement was the **tearing down of statues**. As parents, this is a particularly difficult point to explain, as most of us spend a significant amount of parenting time teaching children to respect property. It's hard to put a definitive answer on whether it is right or wrong to tear down a statue, and our guide aims to put forward some ways to reflect moving forward.

Traditionally, a statue may represent a certain view of history, an event or even someone admirable. For many Black people, the public placement of statues from the colonial era represents an **oversimplified and cruel version of history**, depicting the triumph of empire and erasing the **harrowing realities of colonial rule**. Taking down these statues underscored that **in order to move forward, how we look at the past needs addressing**. On the other hand, some people expressed concern that if we remove statues, we forget history, raising debate as to the best way to **teach history**.

The topic of statues is an interesting discussion to have with an older teenage child and an opportunity to invite your children to **think about how they think the past should be represented in the public space**. Questioning what a statue represents and where the statue is erected is a good place to start.



You could ask questions such as:

- 1.) What do you think statues should represent?
- 2.) Where would you put a statue and of what?
- 3.) Who do you think should decide the commissioning of a statue?
- 4.) How do you think we should remember difficult events in history?

Free speech

The concept of free speech is important at some point to introduce to children. As British citizens, we are lucky to enjoy the right to freedom of speech, defined by the European Convention on Human Rights as follows:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.”

However, while this does mean that holding and expressing opinions can't be controlled, it's important to bear in mind the following addition to the Article:

“The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others...”



Children may have been told off by their parents or teachers for swearing, saying mean things or making inappropriate jokes. This might be accidental, where children imitate adults or other children around them without knowing it's wrong, or purposeful.

It's no longer socially acceptable to make jokes with racial undertones, use racial slurs or express unpopular opinions around race. In fact, expressing such opinions that encourage racial hatred directly contravenes the Human Rights Act.

We should encourage our children to become self-aware of things they say that might be hurtful to others, to actively teach them why these things are wrong rather than just excusing them for just “being children”, and to prevent these behaviours from becoming habitual.

In these discussions, we can acknowledge the existence of free speech and freedom of expression while also remembering that we have a responsibility towards others with whom we share our society.

HOW DO I EXPLAIN WHITE PRIVILEGE?

There is an excellent video that perfectly captures the concept of **privilege as a whole**. A group of people line up to start a race. The referee asks questions, such as *"take two step forwards if you have never helped your parents with bills"* and *"if you never wondered where your next meal was coming from"*. After 5 or so questions, the race begins, with the runners at very different starting lines. Naturally, those who were able to step closer to the finish line were at a huge advantage.



A key message from this video is that these things are not in the individual's control, and did not come from any of the decisions they made. That is **privilege**. Here's the video:

<https://youtu.be/4K5fbQ1-zps>.

White privilege is often misunderstood as the assumption that all White people are well-off, have never struggled, or have everything given to them on a plate. This is, of course, not the case, as we understand from the concept of intersectionality (pg. 6) that a multitude of factors affect our individual privilege in life.

But, when we talk about white privilege you're not saying life isn't sometimes tricky or that hardship doesn't exist in White communities. Rather, when explaining White privilege you're saying that hardships or difficult moments experienced in life **are not a result of your skin colour** and that you have not been held back because of your race.

One of the defining signs of White privilege is indeed not needing to think about race. For example, never needing to worry about being on the receiving end of racial slurs or not being asked to justify "where you are originally from" or how "British" you are from the way you look. Other examples of every day White privilege include: studying White history as a core part of the curriculum, and Black history as an optional extra, the lack of training for hairdressers to cut and style afro hair, plasters being available in one 'White' skin tone or children's books being dominated by White protagonists- to name a few.

Some more concrete examples of how white Privilege can be seen in society today include:

- 1.) Black women in the UK are five times more likely to die during childbirth than their White counterparts. This can be attributed to a number of reasons, but racial bias within healthcare services is one of them ([source](#)).
- 2.) Black and Asian jobseekers are twice as likely to be called in for an interview if they “Whiten” their names on their CV ([source](#)).
- 3.) Despite data showing that the Black community in the UK are half as likely to use drugs than the White community, Black people are six times more likely to be stopped and searched for drugs. In the case of possession of Cocaine, White people are 2.5 times more likely than Black people to receive a simple warning instead of being criminally charged. ([source](#)).

And many more examples detailed in [this article](#).

It's important to understand, and to explain to our children, that the concept of white privilege is **not an attack on white people**, but is a reflection of the reality that many communities across the world are affected by.

As Eric Kaufmann, professor of Politics at Birkbeck College, University of London puts it:

“Rather than imagining a world of conflicting groups in which whites oppress non-whites, we should think of white privilege as a complex structure which all people of all races and ethnicities bear some responsibility for. Instead of adopting a simple minded narrative which demonises white identity and casts white people as the villains, we should encourage the whole of society to work collaboratively to reduce system bias.” ([source](#)).

As an individual, we can't eradicate it completely from society as it is deeply ingrained into many of our systems and institutions. **The biggest first step we can take is to recognise it and then to reflect upon how that impacts ourselves and others in our immediate and wider circles..**

Understanding the origins and the history of white privilege, which dates back to the colonial era and has continued and evolved throughout more recent history, is equally as important and allows us to reflect on how we can change our individual actions to uplift those who might not have the same privileges as others: whether we're White, Black, Asian or from any ethnicity.



IT'S NOT JUST A NARRATIVE OF STRUGGLE

As parents, whilst it is important to underscore the importance of racism both today and throughout history, it is equally important to celebrate **Black achievements, contributions, and history outside a frame of struggle**. Western perception has contributed to portrayals of Africa as an impoverished, suffering 'country' with a dark past, rather than a continent with over a **billion people, 50+ countries and 2000+ languages** - each with unique traditions and stories.



The ethnic heritage and contributions of Black communities are something **valuable** that's worth exploring and helps us to acknowledge that Black history is **multi-dimensional, beautiful and inspirational with many positive elements**. We can all do more to ensure we take the time to **understand and appreciate different cultures, traditions and stories**. For example, we can expose our children to different cuisines, Black authors, Black musicians, and Black artists and help our children celebrate diversity. At the same time as introducing our children to new perspectives, ideas and culture, this also allows us to support Black-owned businesses, and as such, help reduce some of the economic inequalities faced by the community. Some directories of Black-owned businesses in the UK can be found at [UK Black Owned](#) and [Black2Business](#).

As well as this, we can and should recognise the contributions that Black inventors, scientists and politicians have made towards many of the modern-day amenities that are used everyday, giving them the credit that's well deserved.

While Thomas Edison is renowned for inventing the lightbulb, few people know that it was actually an **African-American inventor Lewis Latimer** who invented the **carbon filament** that allows the bulb to function. Other inventions which were pioneered or greatly improved by Black inventors include the **three-light traffic light system** (Garrett Morgan, 1923), **refrigerated trucks** (Frederick McKinley Jones, 1940) and the **first colour PC monitor** (Mark Dean, 1980).

These are just a few great trivia facts that can even set your kids apart from others in their class or friendship group, and a way for children to show off their knowledge about the world (as well as boosting their chances in Trivial Pursuit!)

Check out more content, resources and activities in our [Guide to Black History Month](#).

ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO SPEAK UP AGAINST INJUSTICE

Research has shown that racism is still a widespread problem in schools in the UK: Ofsted has reported that racist language is still commonplace in schools, and around 60% of teaching staff has witnessed racist bullying amongst pupils (source).

Many parents may shy away from discussions of race, under the preconception that 'my kids wouldn't behave like this.' However, even if you think your kids wouldn't personally engage in racist behaviour, there are still things they can do to help **create safe and inclusive spaces for everyone**.

Encouraging our children to speak up and stand up to racism is not asking your child to fully understand exactly what it feels like to experience racism. Rather as parents we should be helping them to **understand the struggle as if it were their own**. As parents, we're not trying to pass on the idea that every minority group feels oppressed, rather we should be helping our children **learn when to listen and when to speak up, be proactive learners and positively alter implicit bias**.

This means encouraging the next generation, as well as ourselves, **to be mindful citizens that are open to listening and are prepared to improve the way they see the world**. Inspire your children to be **brave** and speak out to their teachers, their friends, their parents, and figures of authority in cases of injustice. Encourage them to be **curious** and to **question** their own behaviour or the prejudice present in school or activities.



The Guide to Allyship suggests to:

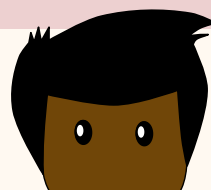
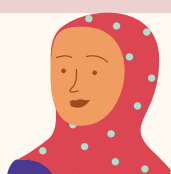
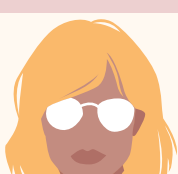
Stand up, even when you feel scared

Transfer the benefits of your privilege to those who lack it

Acknowledge that while you too feel pain, the conversation is not about you

Own your mistakes and de-center yourself

Understand that your education is up to you Amplify the voices of oppressed before your own



BEING A ROLE MODEL THROUGH ACTION

Perhaps one of the biggest takeaways from our guide is that **changing attitudes towards race starts at home**. Once we as parents understand anti-racism ourselves, we are then able to lead by example to our children.

Being open to change and criticism of current views is a powerful lesson, helping our children become better and conscientious world citizens. **Actions often speak louder than words, and our children mirror how we act in day-to-day life**. From a young age children take note of our actions, meaning that if you open discussion on race at home, yet treat people differently in view of their race, **your children are likely to adopt similar behaviour**.

Whilst it's not always easy, as parents we should try to acknowledge and be aware of our own implicit bias. **Take note of your gestures, how you look at people, and how you interact with people**. Small changes such as these go a long way.



A SELECTION OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY (PLEASE LOOK BEYOND THIS LIST AS WELL!):



Editorial picks

BOOKS:



Younger children:



Grace Byers: I am enough (Age 3-8)

A child-friendly simple picture book that reminds us to love ourselves for who we are, to be kind and to respect others

Innosanto Nagara: A is for Activist (1+)

An ABC book packed with definitions and eye-catching pictures that help children engage in and understand activism



Ann Hazzard: Something Happened In Our Town (age 4-8)

The story of a white family and a black family as they explore a police shooting of a Black man in their town. The book aims to help children understand and identify racial injustice and help answer questions on the nature of traumatic events.



Matthew Cherry: Hair Love

A short book and film that narrates an African-American father's relationship with his daughter and styling her hair. The book encourages love and mainstream exposure to people of colour's hair.

Cobzi A. Cabrera: My Hair is a Garden

Mackenzie is upset about mean comments about her hair. We follow her story as she learns to love her hair with the help of her neighbour Miss Tillie. Using her garden as a metaphor Mackenzie learns not to fear her hair but to see it as beautiful.



Vashti Harrison: Little Leaders: Bold Women In Black History (Age 7-10)

An illustrated history book of the stories of amazing Black women in history and their achievements

Andrea Davis Pinkey: Let it Shine (ages 5-9)

An illustrated story of Black women doing amazing acts in history, speaking out against racism and oppression.

Jacqueline Woodson: The Day You Begin (Age 4-7)

The story of finding the courage and bravery to be different and connect with people when you feel alone or when "no one is quite like you"

K.N Chimbiri: The Story of the Windrush (Age 7+)

An inspiring and understandable account of the Windrush generation for children

Patrice Laurence: Diver's Daughter (Age 9+)

The story of a young black girl, Eve, growing up in Tudor England



Benjamin Zephania: Windrush Child

A beautiful novel that shows us what it was like to be a child of the Windrush generation through the eyes of Leonard, a child arriving from Jamaica to the UK.

Floella Benjamin: Coming to England

Here we follow ten-year-old Floella as she and her family set sail from the Caribbean to a new life in London. This child friendly book depicts the difficulties Floella faces arriving in London, as it isn't exactly how she expected.



Fran Manushkin: Happy in our Skin (Age 2+)

A book to teach kids about diversity. The illustrations feature children with different skin colours, glasses, freckles, unibrows, wheelchairs, and birthmarks to help encourage the beauty of diversity

Ilyasah Shabazz: Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up To Be Malcolm X (Age 5-10)

The childhood story of one of the most influential Black American men, Malcolm X, written by his daughter



Ibtihaj Muhammad: The Proudest Blue (Age 4-7)

A beautiful story of being proud of your identity. In the face of hurtful words, Faizah finds the way to be proud of her bright blue hijab.

Atinuke: Amazing Africa (Age 6+)

A picture book which illustrates Africa country by country, and an excellent resource to inspire children to see Africa in all its diversity.

More here:

https://twitter.com/wanderingbritt_/status/1267617830872154113?s=21

The Guardian's Windrush Book List: A list of books for teenagers and parents on the Windrush Generation

[Waterstones Black History Month Reading list](#)

Older children:

★ **Malorie Blackman: Noughts and Crosses series** (age 11-16)

Takes social norms and flips them on their head and confronts the legacy of slavery in an engaging and comprehensible manner for teenagers.

Maya Angelou: I know why the caged birds sing (14+)

The first of seven autobiographies of the writer Maya Angelou, describing how her love of literature and personal strength helped her face racism throughout childhood and early adolescence

★ **Angie Thomas: The Hate You Give** (14+)

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter Movement this story follows Starr Carter and we follow her journey as she tries to speak up for the tragic death of her childhood friend, Khalil.

Lisa Heathfield: I am not a number (14+)

Set in a dystopian future, we follow the story of the rise of ultra-conservatism through the protagonist Ruby

Parents (and older children):

★ **The Lonely Londoners: Sam Selvon**

The story of black immigrants coming to Britain after WW2, explains how Britain in need treated immigrants with racism and prejudice

★ **Nikesh Shukla: The Good Immigrant**

A collection of short personal experiences of the experience of 21 influential British Asian and minority ethnic voices in Britain today. They paint a picture of what it is like to be 'other' in Britain today. Poignant, challenging, funny, interesting, and inspiring, this is a must for your teenage child to see Britain outside of a white lens.

★ **Reni Eddo-Lodge: Why I'm no longer talking to White people about race**

A sharp wake up call to institutionalised racism and outlines what it means to be a person of colour in Britain in 2020.

Afua Hirsch: Brit(ish)

An exploration into what it really means to be Black and not accepted in British society and how the impact of the past on the present.

Small Island, Andrea Levy

A book, TV series and a play connects continents during and post war time. From Jamaica to the UK and India, we explore the viewpoints of four main characters over several years.

Stephen Bourne: War to Windrush: Black Women in Britain 1939 to 1948

A book that puts the spotlight on the lives of black women's lives in mid-20th century Britain.

Louise Hare: Lovely City

A thought-provoking and compelling novel about a Jamaican immigrant living in postwar London.



David Olusoga: Black and British: A Forgotten History

A historical exploration of the long relationship between Britain and the people of Africa dating to Roman times.

Bernadine Evaristo: Girl, Woman, Other

A novel that follows 12 women over several decades and a sweeping history of the black British experience



Ijeoma Oluo: So You Want to Talk About Race

An exploration of race in America, aspects of white supremacy--from police brutality to the mass incarceration of African Americans

WEBSITES:



[Guide To Allyship](#) (11+)

[Talking about race](#) (parents)



[Anti-racism resource list for beginners:](#) (parents and older children)

[100 race-conscious things you can say to your child:](#) (parents)



[Your kids aren't too young to talk about race:](#) (parents)

[How to talk to kids about race and racism:](#) (parents)

[Teaching Resources on Africa:](#)

Packed full of resources to educate yourself and your family about Africa geographically, historically, musically and the arts both present and past for all the family.

[Keeping the momentum on Black Lives Matter:](#)

An American mum blog explaining how to keep momentum behind the movement. (parents)



Dr. Eddie Moore's 21 Day Challenge

Recognising anti-blackness and discrimination (parents)



A Great website packed with resources, how to guides and tools to help combat racism today

The Good Ancestor Academy (parents)

Abolishing white body supremacy (parents)

WEBSITES ON BLACK AND CARIBBEAN HISTORY:

100 Great Black Britons (all the family)

National Geographic facts for kids: Mary Seacole, Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks



National Archives: Black History Resources (older children and parents)



National Archives: Caribbean History Resources (older children and parents)

National Archives: Black Presence, Asian and Black History (older children and parents)

National Archives: Walter Tull: older children and parents

BBC list of inspirational women and men for all the family



The Windrush Foundation: a selection of fantastic downloadable resources that incorporate music, geography and history in an engaging way for children.

UNESCO General History Africa: older children and parents

Kingdoms of Ancient and Medieval Africa: older children and parents



How big is Africa?: for all the family

World Heritage Sites List: for all the family

Soldiers of the Caribbean: Britain's forgotten heroes: older children and parents

BBC 2 Black and British: A forgotten History: older children and parents

INSPIRING PEOPLE:

Reni Eddo-Lodge: provides a very comprehensive perspective to understanding racism.

Jane Elliot: an expert for parents and has highlighted anti-Black racism effectively throughout her career.

PODCASTS (CLICK TO LISTEN)



Life Kit: Parents. Talking Race with young children About Race. Parents



(Reni Eddo-Lodge) Code: Switch NPR. Parents/Older children

Not all superheroes wear capes: how you have the power to change the world (TED Talk). Parents/ older children

The Response podcast: Inequality, structural racism, and the fight for justice after the Grenfell Tower fire. Parents/older children



More examples here: <https://bellocollective.com/8-podcasts-that-help-you-talk-to-kids-about-race-e5a4b639ac3f>

FILMS:



Younger children / Family

The Pursuit of Happiness (12A)

Based on a true story of a father-son family the film follows a father and son rise from the bottom rung of the ladder in 1980s San Francisco

The Hate You Give (12)

Based on the novel and inspired by the Black Lives Matter Movement this story follows Starr Carter and we follow her journey as she tries to speak up for the tragic death of her childhood friend, Khalil.

Remember the Titans (PG)

Based on the true story of high school football coach Herman Boone in the 1970s, and how he diffuses racial tensions, teaching his players to come together on and off the field.

Hidden Figures (PG)

Based on the true story of three mathematicians in the 1960s — Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson. This film portrays how these three women overcame race and gender obstacles and become key members of NASA.



Queen of Katwe (PG)

Set in Katwe, Uganda, 10-year-old Phiona Mutesi's life changes forever after a visiting missionary teaches her how to play chess. She becomes an international chess star, and we follow how she faces poverty, violence, and racism along the way.



Akeelah and the Bee (PG)

The story centers around Eleven-year-old girl from south Los Angeles, Akeelah. Her mother works incredibly hard and she lost her dad at six. We watch as Akeelah learns to believe in her capabilities and overcome challenges to compete at spelling bees.

The Boy who Harnessed the Wind (PG)

Based on a true story, this film depicts William Kamkwamba, a 13-year-old boy who devises a way to save his Malawi village from famine.

The Painting (U)

An animated metaphor for racism. Originally a French film we explore a kingdom is divided into the three castes: the impeccably painted Alldunns; the Halfies who the Painter has left incomplete; and the untouchable Sketchies

The Princess and the Frog (PG)

Disney's first on-screen Black Princess, this story follows Tiana on her journey to opening her own restaurant. A kind-hearted, funny, and lovely story of turning a frog prince back into a human being.



Coach Carter (12A)

Based on a true story, a sports store owner accepts the job of basketball coach for his old high school. He sets out on a mission to change things attitudes surrounding relationships with others, kindness, and education to ensure his team has access to the best opportunities in life after high school.

See you yesterday: (15)

A teen-targeted drama in which two high school juniors create a time machine to go back in time to a moment before someone becomes the innocent victim of a fatal police shooting.

Biographical films (older children and parents)

★ **Becoming (PG)**
Join former first lady Michelle Obama in an intimate documentary look at her life, hopes and connection with others as she tours with

Becoming Mandela (Long walk to freedom) (12)

A chronicle of Nelson Mandela's life journey from his childhood in a rural village through to his inauguration as the first democratically elected president of South Africa, depicting Mandela's viewpoint on the apartheid years.

★ **Who killed Malcom X? (12)**
A Netflix miniseries following the work of Abdur-Rahman Muhammad, a historian who has been investigating the assassination of Malcolm

★ **X.Ray (15)**
An award-winning independent film focusing on the life of Ray Charles, a pioneer of soul music with one of the most recognisable voices in American music who went blind at the age of seven

Ali (15)

A biography of Muhammad Ali following his heavyweight boxing career, conversion to Islam and criticism of the Vietnam War during a time of social and political upheaval following the assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King.

Malcolm X (15)

A dramatised biopic following key events in the life and upbringing of Malcolm X, one of the most well-known civil rights and black empowerment activists.

What Happened, Miss Simone? (15)

A biography of the life of American singer and civil rights activist Nina Simone, combining unreleased archive footage and interviews with her daughter and friends.

King in the Wilderness (R)

A HBO produced biography on the last 18 months of Martin Luther King Jr.'s life. Very current, especially with the discussions of non-violence and the current discourse surrounding how to protest.

Contextual / political dramas: appropriate for older children and parents

American History X (15)

An American crime drama film following a former neo-Nazi imprisoned for killing two black youths who vows to change his racist, violent ways, struggling with his own deeply ingrained prejudices and wondering if his family can overcome a lifetime of hate.

Do The Right Thing (15)



A local becomes upset when he sees that his local pizzeria in a predominantly black neighbourhood only shows Italian actors on their Wall of Fame, rather than black actors. The wall becomes a symbol of racism and hate to the neighbourhood and tensions rise on the hottest day of the year.

Moonlight (15)



The first award-winning film with an all-black cast and LGBTQ-related following the youth, adolescent and early adult life of Chiron, exploring the difficulties he faces with his sexuality, identity and abuse he endured growing up.

BlacKkKlansman (R)



Based on a true story, Ron Stallworth is the first African-American detective to serve in the Colorado Springs Police Department. Determined to make a name for himself, Stallworth bravely sets out the undercover investigation of a lifetime: infiltrate and expose the Ku Klux Klan.

Historical films about slavery: appropriate for older children and parents

Amistad (15)

A historical drama based on true events aboard the slave ship “La Amistad” following the events in which the kidnapped Mende tribesmen managed to gain control of their captor’s ship, and the international legal battle that ensued.



12 Years a Slave (15)

An adaptation of the 1853 slave memoir by Solomon Northup, this biographical period drama follows his life after he was kidnapped and sold into slavery by two conmen for 12 years before being released.

Documentaries: appropriate for older children and parents



13th (15)

A powerful documentary that addresses racial issues confronting America in 2016 including police brutality and mass incarceration (currently available on Netflix)

The Black Power Mixtape (12A)

A documentary film, directed by Göran Olsson, that examines the evolution of the Black Power movement in American society from 1967 to 1975 through the lens of Swedish filmmakers

When They See Us (15)

Based on a true story, five teens from Harlem are falsely accused of a brutal attack in Central Park.



Chris Rock's Good Hair (PG-13)

A documentary film focusing on the issue of how African-American women have perceived their hair and historically styled it, exploring the current styling industry for black women, images of what is considered as acceptable or desirable and their relation to African-American culture.



When the Moors Ruled in Europe (Youtube)

An eye-opening Youtube documentary highlighting the Moors' architecture and intellectual accomplishments in Spain, information which has been systematically written out of history since the 1500's.

Paris is Burning (15)

An invaluable documentary to the end of the "Golden Age" of New York City drag balls and a thoughtful exploration of race, class, gender and sexuality in America.

Self-Made (Inspired by the life of Madam C.J. Walker) (Netflix series)

Based on a true story, an African American washerwoman rises from poverty to build a beauty empire and become the first female self-made millionaire.



The Tulsa Lynching of 1921 (15)

This is a Documentary of the infamous Tulsa Massacre of 1921, locally called 'The Tulsa Race Riot.' Most of the Black section of town was burned and many Black citizens were murdered by roving gangs of White racists.



Black Wall Street Burning (R)

A retelling of the worst act of American terrorism and racism in American History. The Tulsa race massacre of 1921 took place on May 31 and June 1, 1921, when mobs of white residents attacked black residents and businesses of the Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Black and British (older children and parents)

BBC series on some of the overlooked Black figures from British History

Written by Lily Pryer, Francesca Chong and Saffia Anderson, with special contributions from Mischa Macaskill and Idris Mhiri.

Special thank you to all those who have spoken up against the discrimination to help us understand, even though they don't owe us an explanation of the pain felt.

Further credits: Twitter threads [Semaj Mitchell](#), [Brittany](#), and [Makayla Butler](#)

[Kris Staub](#) illustration on Black Lives Matter <https://www.krisstraub.com/>

Good Housekeeping What Black Lives Matters Mean
<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/a32745051/what-black-lives-matter-means/>

The Guardian
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/09/protests-british-history>

National Geographic <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/in-the-news/talking-about-race/>

Woman's Day
<https://www.womansday.com/life/entertainment/g32745225/movies-about-race-racism-kids/>

Gal-Dem Magazine <https://gal-dem.com/the-death-of-shukri-abdi-she-was-failed-when-she-was-alive-and-shes-still-being-failed-now/>

Bello Collective <https://bellocollective.com/8-podcasts-that-help-you-talk-to-kids-about-race-e5a4b639ac3f>

History.com <https://www.history.com/news/8-black-inventors-african-american#:~:text=Carbon%20Light%20Bulb%20Filament%2C%20Invented,African%20DAmerican%20inventor%20Lewis%20Latimer>

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