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Dear Resource Parents -

With all that is going on in our world today, it is important to have tools to talk to kids. As a resource parent, you can assume children of all ages are exposed to information about what is happening in our nation today. They may overhear adult conversations, see a video on YouTube, or watch news coverage of protests. Children may be worried for their own safety or that of their family and they likely have questions about what the protests mean, why people have been killed by police, and if they are safe. The American Academy of Pediatrics (website: <https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2020/american-academy-of-pediatrics-condemns-racism-offers-advice-for-families-for-how-to-talk-to-their-children/>) outline the following recommendations shared by Dr. Heard-Garris and Jacqueline Dougé, MD, MPH, FAAP, co-author of the AAP [policy statement](#) on racism:

- Check in with your child. Ask what they know, what they've seen, and how they are feeling. Validate their feelings and reassure them it's normal to feel emotions. You know your child best and what information they can handle. For younger children, you can tell them what you are doing to keep your family safe. For pre-teens and older children, you can ask if they've experienced mistreatment or racism, or witnessed this happening.
- Watch for changes in your child's behavior – some children may become more aggressive, while others will become withdrawn. If you are concerned about your child suffering more severe anxiety, fear or distress, reach out to your pediatrician or mental health provider for additional support.
- Place limits on what your child sees in media. Do not leave the TV on in the background. With older children and teens, watch with them and discuss what you're seeing. Listen to their observations and share your own. You can use commercial breaks, or pausing, to have brief discussions. With younger children, limit their exposure to media, including TV, smartphones or tablets, and make sure media exposure occurs in a common area where parents can check in.
- As an adult, tune into your own emotions and check that you are ok. If you are not, ask for help to deal with the trauma and emotional impact of these images.
- Create a list of your own coping strategies, and when you need to use them, tap into that list.
- For all families, this is a teachable moment, when you can discuss the history of racism and discrimination in the U.S. and equip your children to make change.
- If you struggle to find the “right” words, consider using books or other resources to share with your child. HealthyChildren.org offers some tips in [this article](#). You can share with your children that no one is perfect, talk about what you are doing to be anti-racist, what you have learned, and how you as a family can step up.

Below are some additional resources to help with these conversations:

A CNN/Sesame Street Town Hall for Kids and Families “Coming Together: Standing Up to Racism” will air on Saturday June 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. The show will talk about racism, the recent nationwide protests, embracing diversity and being more empathetic and understanding. More information is available at the link below:

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/02/us/cnn-sesame-street-standing-up-to-racism/index.html>

The American Psychological Association

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/kids-discrimination>

Center for Racial Justice and Education: Resources for Talking about Race, Racism and Radicalized Violence with Kids

<https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/resources-for-talking-about-race-racism-and-racialized-violence-with-kids/>

healthychildren.org: Talking to Children about Racism

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/Talking-to-Children-about-Racism.aspx>

Below is a short video from University of Missouri Disaster and Community Crisis Center on Helping Children to Cope with Media Coverage of Community Racial Trauma:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Qtn2ZFx6ZM&feature=youtu.be>

I hope you find these resources helpful. These circumstances can provide an opportunity for teachable moments, to challenge and correct stereotypes and to model for children how they can make a positive difference in their communities. If you have additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child’s caseworker.

Thank you for the important work you do to support children and families.

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