

# COFFI talk



One of the most important steps we can take to facilitate change is to TALK about diversity, bias, race and inclusion in our families and with our children. Building the change we need is something that happens over the course of many conversations. What we want people to take away is: have them. As we get more comfortable talking about these issues, we'll create a more inclusive community for all of us. If you've tried talking with kiddo and they didn't quite "get" it, that's entirely normal and okay. Try again. Lead with love, not shame. Ask open questions. Show them that you care what they have to say. You got this. - COFFI Team

- ♥ Adults in our children's lives need to PROACTIVELY MODEL a positive attitude toward diversity and inclusion.
- ♥ It's NOT TOO EARLY to talk about race! Children as early as age 2 have been shown to internalize racial biases (Hirschfeld, 2008). Children are curious. They will point out similarities and differences among people they encounter. With young children, start by talking about similarities as well as differences. Talk about how differences make us unique and special.
- ♥ DON'T SHUSH! Instead of shushing a child for observing differences such as, "Her skin is so dark." Try: "You are noticing that people are unique and different. I think her skin is beautiful; one skin color is not better than the other. Isn't it amazing how many shades our skin can be?" If necessary due to the nature of the comment or question, apologize and rephrase in a sensitive and appropriate way.
- ♥ With older children, point out and discuss when you see stereotypes or racial bias in their media. We must SPEAK UP when we encounter or witness instances of bias and racism in daily life and we ought to encourage children to do the same.
- ♥ Model a POSITIVE ATTITUDE toward diverse perspectives. Bring diverse and inclusive toys, books and other media into your homes. Invite friends of color for play dates and/or adult get togethers. Try new cuisines. Learn about the destination country, language and traditions before going there for vacation.
- ♥ Discuss often! READ books together that spark questions and conversation such as *Sulwe* by Lupita Nyong'o and *Say Something* by Peter H. Reynolds. Talk about how families can look different but love the same.
- ♥ ADVOCATE for diversity in our community, workplace and children's classrooms, including through training and changes to curriculum and policies.
- ♥ ENCOURAGE children to PARTICIPATE in efforts that work toward positive change.