

# Race

## **Racial Identity**

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Racial identity is the culture, beliefs, values, and traditions shared by people of a race. Children who are raised with limited contact with their culture may develop a negative racial identity and suffer low self-esteem. Transculturally placed foster children benefit from sensitive, thoughtful parenting that provides them opportunities to interact with others of their own culture and exposes them to positive messages about their culture.

## **Messages about Racial Differences**

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Convey positive nonverbal and verbal messages about racial differences. Nonverbal communication includes smiles, hugs, and showing warmth. Verbal communication includes complimenting children's appearance, intelligence and talents.

Seek additional information from literature and reputable internet websites about children's culture

## **Concerns about Transracial/Transcultural Parenting**

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Given the United States' racist history and the residual effects of racism and oppression, parents should be aware that people may be concerned about racially different non-relatives' ability to properly raise minority children.

The concern is that transracial families will not preserve and celebrate racial differences thereby eradicating minority groups' rich histories and identities (Hollingsworth, 1998; National Association of Black Social Workers [NABSW], 1972; 1994).

## **Racial and Cultural Connectedness**

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Seek out recreational, social, and educational resources so children can be immersed in their culture.

## **Inform Children about History and Positive Contributions**

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Educate children about their race and ethnicity using age-appropriate information. Include information about the rich heritage of people of different races and ethnicities and their accomplishments and contributions to all aspects of American and global history.

## Racism and Oppression

When children are able to understand, parents can openly discuss why people behave in ways that are disrespectful based upon race or ethnicity and explore various ways to deal with these negative instances. Parents should let conversations occur naturally and present information in a manner that does not frighten children, make them feel bad about themselves, or cause them to fear others.

## Survival Skills

Provide children with survival skills that can protect them or help them handle racism. Children like to hear positive things about themselves and their culture so they will need emotional support when they understand that they are likely to experience negativity and mistreatment in their lives because of the color of their skin or other cultural differences.

### **References**

Hollingsworth, L. D. (1998). Promoting same-race adoption for children of color. *Social Work*, 43(2), 104-16. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/215273061?accountid=14604>

National Association of Black Social Workers (1972). New York: *Position paper: Transracial adoption*.

National Association of Black Social Workers (1994). Detroit, MI: *Position statement: Preserving African-American families*.