

# Social Emotional Learning at Home

## SEL for Parents and Families

### Raising Your Kids to Challenge Racism Through the lens of Social Emotional Learning...



SEL, as a tool, has the potential to help people move from their emotions, to agency and then to action. Tapping into our own social emotional competence of **self-awareness** and **self-management**, we identify and process our own difficult emotions at this time; using our **social awareness** to recognize with empathy and understand what others are going through as we reflect on our own identities and our role in systemic racism; having the **relationship skills** to listen and communicate with our family, friends and colleagues; and using **responsible**

**decision-making** to actually understand the impact of our actions and inactions, and commit to the work of challenging racism.

~Karen Neimi, President & CEO - [CASEL.org](https://CASEL.org)

CASEL hosted a webinar recently that addressed how we, as parents, can have conversations with our children about racism. As we look at what's going on in the US, the world, and in our own country, we can help our children understand what's happening and why it's happening. The following are some guiding principles for talking authentically about racism (~adapted from Dr. B. Barthelus & Dr. D. Rivas-Drake, CASEL):

- **Name it** - racism and racist violence need to be explicitly called out when seen happening. Don't leave it to others to define how your children view race. Be intentional in giving your children the vocabulary for racism. For example, if your child asks you what is happening. You can reply, "they are protesting because they are challenging anti-black racism," or "what is happening is racist violence."
- **Humanize those who are victimized** - think about the human person-say their name, tell your children that they were members of a family and community. Recognize and acknowledge the grief and mourning of this person's family and friends.
- **Show up and do the work** - build your own understanding of race, privilege and identity. The conversations of race and racism is hard. It takes courage. Model humility and action for your children. This is a process, and it takes ongoing learning, self-reflection, and discussion.
- **Talk as a family about your core values** - what will guide your family's approach and response when racism occurs? How will you commit to making the world better for everyone? Engage and hold each other accountable for follow through.

### Recommended books to read about Racism



For Adults - [White Fragility](#) by DiAngelo



For Teens - BCTF recommended list



For Children - [A Kid's Book about Racism](#) by Jelani Memory



For Children - [They all saw a Cat](#) by Brendan Wenzel



At every stage, you can have age-appropriate conversations with your children about race. Young children notice and think about race. Adults often worry that talking about race will encourage racial bias in children, but the opposite is true. **Silence about race reinforces racism** by letting children draw their own conclusions based on what they see. Teachers and families can play a powerful role in helping children of all ages develop positive attitudes about race and diversity and skills to promote a more just future—but only if we talk about it!

Follow this link to read about how you can support the conversation with your child in each stage of their young development - <http://www.childrenscommunityschool.org/>

## CONNECTING TO THE NATURAL WORLD – A MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY ~SOURCE: OISE STAY AT HOME CLUB

As we look to the natural world for stability and support, this activity helps us find connections in places we may not have seen before. Based on First Peoples' Principles of Learning and indigenous traditions, the activity focuses on how living spirits reside in all things.

With your child or a friend, go to a park-like setting with at least a few different trees. (If adhering to physical distancing measures, you can do this while being 2 meters apart). Process -

- Taking turns and using blindfolds, bluffs or t-shirts, person 1 leads the blindfolded person 2 to a tree using words, directions and guided steps.
- Once at the tree, person 2 using all of their senses, except sight, tries to acquaint themselves with the tree. They can even give the tree a name. Have person 2 answer these questions:
  - >what does the tree feel like, the bark, the roots, the branches?
  - >what does the tree smell like?
  - >putting their ear up to the tree, what are the sounds or noises heard near the tree or from the tree?
- Once person 2 has gotten to know their tree, person 1 will lead them away. Once away, person 2 can take off their blindfold and using what they learned, person 2 will try to go find their tree.
- Switch: Person 2 will lead person 1 through the process

After both people have finished, debrief with the following questions:

- What did you notice about your tree?
- What senses did you use to recognize your tree?
- How did you feel in the presence of your tree?
- How do you think the tree felt in your presence?

The last 2 questions reflect reciprocal relationship and the two way connection to our natural world.

