



Start the Conversation

Our Relationship to Race: *Noticing Difference* Activity Guide

In this guide you will find a list of activities that can be used to continue the conversation and support the themes explored in ***Our Relationship to Race: Noticing Difference***. These activities can be practiced at home, in the classroom, in childcare centers, at the park, and in other community spaces and can be modified to support a wide range of ages. Choose what activities you feel are best for you and the young people in your life!

Tips from Early Childhood Education Specialist, Tara Kirton:

- Talking about race and injustice with young children can feel a little bit intimidating but it doesn't have to be. Just like children might notice a friend's new shoes, or they might notice a rainbow in the sky after it rains, young children observe similarities and differences about people in the world all of the time. After all, children are constantly making sense of the world and their place in it and this remains true even when the conversation may lead to topics that might be uncomfortable for some adults. While it may seem easier to silence young children's curiosities and comments, this can be harmful and sends the message that race is a topic that is not okay to talk about. Since we wouldn't silence a question related to math, science or a book that we read, likewise we should not silence children's questions and comments about race.
- Talking about race with young children often feels tricky for adults for a number of reasons, including the fact that as adults we have also learned to avoid race as a topic. The other idea that makes it hard to explain to children for some adults is the fact that race is not based on anything real, since it's a social construct. Race and racism are all premised on something that does not exist in reality, however they have real life implications which makes it complex. The better understanding you have of race, the more able you are to help your young person grow in their understanding. And remember, "I don't know, let me do some more learning about that" is always a viable answer to a child's question.
- Keep your eyes and ears open for comments of othering to and from your child. These comments often come up when children are with their peers. When you hear these comments, open up a conversation as close to in-the-moment as possible. What comment was made and what difference did it highlight? What questions might your young person have about the difference or othering that they named? What conclusions are they drawing for themselves? And are these conclusions accurate/useful? Help your young person put the pieces together with curiosity and empathy.



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Activities for Young People at Home & School:

“When it comes to young kids, it actually starts simply with the idea of who I am,” Sesame Workshop’s Rocio Galarza said. “And then once I understand myself, once I understand that I can be strong in my skin, once I understand that there’s a lot of good in me, inside and out — then we start understanding the differences in others.” ([Teaching Military Kids About Racial Justice](#))

Mirror Exploration (From Tara Kirton)

Using a mirror, invite children to look at themselves and say what they notice. If needed you can prompt with questions like:

- *What do you notice/see?*
- *What do you notice about your skin?*
- *What do you notice about your hair?*

You can offer adjectives to help your child find descriptive words, like soft, smooth, silking and then move towards color and texture.

This can be a way to begin a conversation about race. You can also use Beverly Daniel Tatum’s Egg metaphor for teaching how we are different on the outside, but similar on the inside. Show your child two eggs, one brown and one white. Notice their differences on the outside, then crack the eggs into a bowl. Notice that they are very similar on the inside. This can be a concrete way to help young children understand that something can be different on the outside, but similar on the inside.

About Me Flowers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cT-gkUz0yzs>

Sesame Street offers a fun flower activity that helps young people explore different things about themselves and the things they love. This can be a helpful way to begin conversations about identity and even difference. Doing this activity in a classroom with students can help children celebrate themselves and learn about how they are different from and similar to their peers.

Difference Storytime

Children’s books can be a great way to explore difference with your young person. Using the book list from STC’s Our Relationship to Race Resource Guide. Select a list of books that explore identities and experiences different from your and your child’s. Choose a new book to explore each week and use it as a starting point to begin a conversation about differences. Encourage your young person to ask questions about what they notice:



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- What do you notice about the people in this story?
- How are you similar?
- How are you different?
- What questions do you have about...

Use these 4 steps from the video to explore: Notice, Ask, Lear, Celebrate.

***The Difference Detectives Activity Book* by Nicole Hogsett:**

When a gray fog rolls over the City of Different, everything becomes the same! It's up to The Difference Detectives to discover how to stop the gray fog before it spreads everywhere. The Difference Detectives is an interactive activity book that challenges children to notice, ask questions, learn about, and celebrate what makes people different!

Download the PDF here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WS3dP4xvehJeDylw_cEUPU6ByvwgSByl/view?usp=sharing

Activities from the Video:

Use these 4 steps to navigate difference with your young person!

Notice what's different.

Ask, when you don't know.

Learn new things.

Celebrate, everyone.

And remember, "I don't know, let me do some more learning about that" is always a viable answer to a child's question.