

*The following statement was written by co-author John Nimmo and published in **ExchangeEveryday**. John is also a Board Member of Dimensions Education Research Foundation, the parent organization for Exchange Press.*

Talking With Children About Race and Social Justice

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Now is not the time to be silent.

Now is the time to listen carefully to the meaning children are giving to the events around them. Young children are seeing and hearing the justifiable anger of people across this nation. Yes, limit children's exposure to media that is not designed for them, but accept that they have the right and capacity to understand the reality of racism in our country.

Now is the time to respond to their questions and observations with authenticity. Find the language and words that are developmentally meaningful for your children, but don't shy away from using words that children are seeking to understand like protest, police brutality, and White supremacy.

While we need to reassure children about their world, it is okay to express that you don't know everything and that you want to learn more. Reflect visibly on your own social identities and values and their relationship to race and racism. As a White parent and teacher, I accept responsibility to not

only to be aware of who I am, but to also model the everyday and concrete ways I can confront my privilege and be an ally for social justice.

We can reassure our children that good people can feel angry and frustrated, while also emphasizing values of care, kindness and community. I need to be careful not to confuse "safety" with the White privilege to not talk about racism. Attend to your child's protection from the trauma that is racism.

Now is not the time to be distracted from the underlying issues of injustice for Black and Brown Peoples, by talking about White people doing good things. Instead, talk about the [proud tradition of protest](#), and provide examples, both historical and contemporary (e.g., Black Lives Matter) about its important role in creating a better world. Make this a continuing conversation in which children place the events of today into the large context of the many stories of People of Color contributing to the community, overcoming injustice, and leading diverse and complex lives.

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