

How to Talk about Identity & Belonging with Kids

Why it matters:

Research shows that children internalize messages about identity and belonging from as young as *3 months. They can start forming ideas about race and identity before they have the language to express it. If we proactively create a container for these conversations, they will be supported in developing a healthy approach to their identity. Here are some ways you can begin talking about identity and belonging with young children.

What you can do:

Model Behavior

- Infuse lessons of identity and belonging into all aspects of your life. Be aware of stereotypes in the home, including around gendered toys. Encourage emotional expression for your child and model vulnerability.

Center Joy

- Center joy in liberation for all while tackling the injustices around us. Center equity and fairness.

Be Proactive

- Don't wait until something happens in the news to feel the urgency to do something. For babies, board books and toys require intentionality. For young kids, asking simple questions can help them develop language and express their thoughts.

Look Around

- Be intentional about your community. The community you surround your children with will become their version of normal.

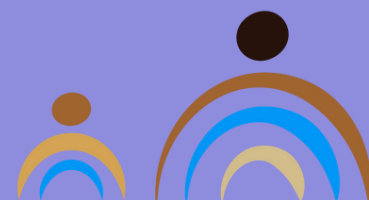
Update Resources

- Surround your child with books, media, toys and art that center characters of various identities in historical contexts as well as just living life. Make sure your library, toys and digital media show a variety of skin tones, races, gender identities, immigration statuses, disabilities, etc.

Questions?

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*Source: [Journal of Experimental Psychology](#)