

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT RACISM



Why is it important? We live in one of the most multi-cultural nations in the world, which should be celebrated and not undermined by racism.

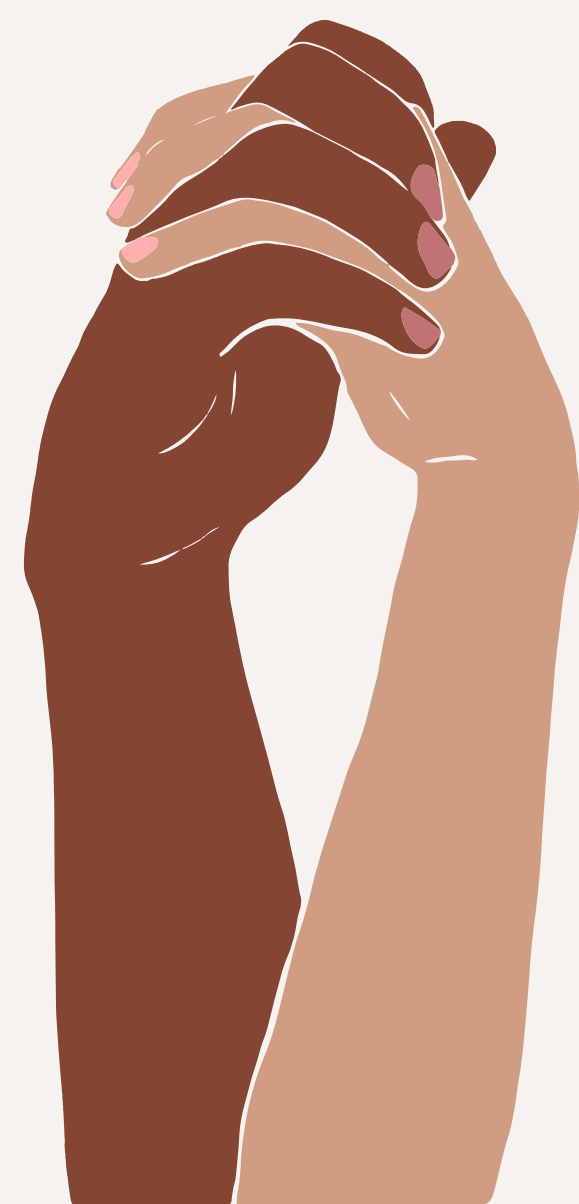
Racism starts at a young age: Children are able to notice race-based discrimination from an early age, therefore not discussing this early on could reinforce the misconception that any racial inequalities that exist are normal.

Racism starts at home: Children are not born seeing colour as a barrier, this is something that they learn from their parents and family.

Effect of racism on kids: Studies have shown that experiencing racism can negatively affect the social, emotional and behavioural development of young children, as well as their sense of identity and self-worth (Berry, 2021).

HISTORY

Australia has a short and violent history, compared to the long and rich history of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous Australians have been the traditional custodians of the land for over 60 000 years - yet the racist political and social agendas of the last two centuries have inflicted immense pain and discrimination on them. A culture for racism is, unfortunately, embedded in the history of colonised Australia, namely through the historic policies of 'Terra Nullius', 'Assimilation' and the 'White Australia Policy'. Despite this dark past, we have the possibility to forge a fairer and more inclusive future for all Australians.



RESEARCH & REFLECTION

The first step to discussing racism with your child is to grasp your own understanding of the issue. Take it upon yourself to become informed and engage in self-reflection.

In the past year, 83% of non-Indigenous people have not socialised with Indigenous Australians (2022 Australian Reconciliation Barometer). This is detrimental as it is social contact that helps build trust, understanding and mateship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians. Recent data revealed that 14% of Indigenous Australian children (aged 5-10 years), and 45% of Indigenous families, have experienced racial discrimination at some point in time (Shepherd, 2017).

Questions you may ask yourself:

What is my racial and cultural heritage and how do I know this?

In what ways do my racial and cultural backgrounds influence how I experience the world?

What is my own level of privilege and how may this affect my biases and beliefs of racial inequality?

How did race play a role in my childhood and/or adolescence?

What steps can I take to combat racism where I see it?



HAVING THE CONVERSATION



Encourage your child to feel proud of their identity: Acceptance of others first requires acceptance of oneself.

Recognise and celebrate differences: If your child recognises something different in a peer, let them know we are all unique and that is great!

Lead by example: Avoid talking poorly about others based on their culture or background. Correct misinformation shared and misperceptions presented about people who are of a different race.

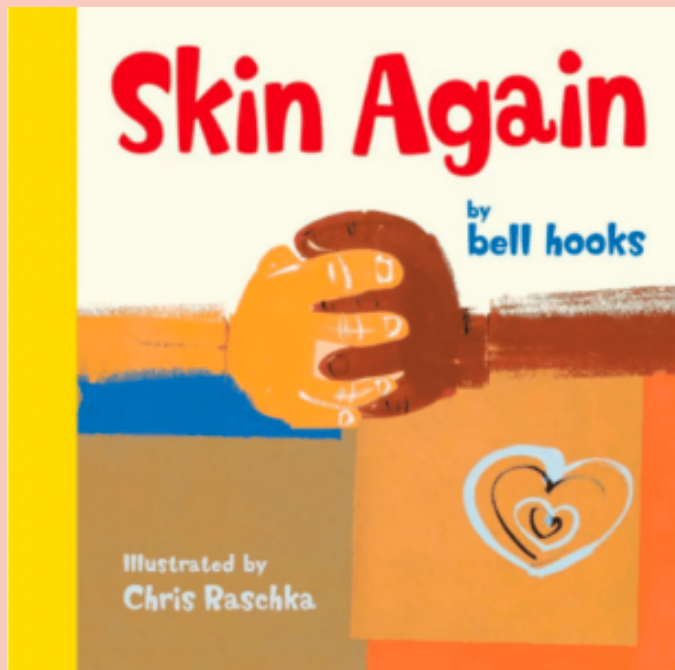
Ask lots of questions: "What have you heard?", or "What are your friends saying?" This will help to start the conversation and you will be able to get an idea of your child's understanding of racism.

Create a safe and open space to share feelings: Let your child know they are always welcome to talk to you about what they see or are feeling.

Keep the conversation going: The conversation shouldn't be a one-time discussion, continue to keep the communication about racism open with your child.



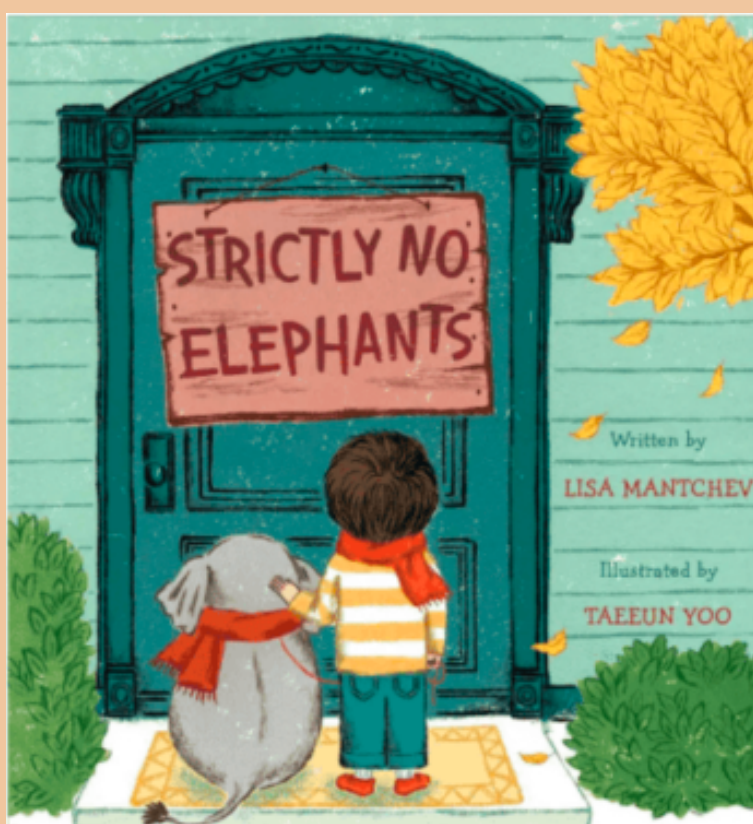
RESOURCES



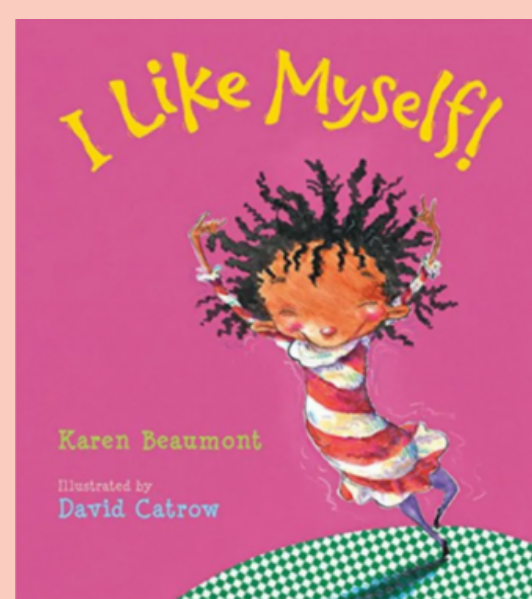
Skin Again by Bell Hooks,
illustrated by Chris Raschka



All the Colors We Are: The Story of How We Get Our Skin Color
by Katie Kissinger



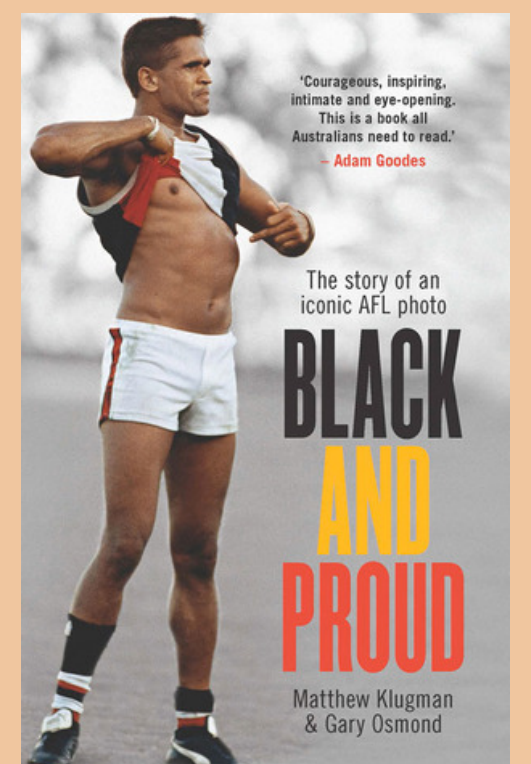
Strictly No Elephants
by Lisa Mantchev
Illustrated by Tae Eun Yoo



I Like Myself!
by Karen Beaumont
Illustrated by David Catrow



A is for Activist
by Innosanto Nagara



Black and Proud
by Matthew Klugman
& Gary Osmond

One Family
by George Shannon
Illustrated by Blanca Gomez

