

HANDOUT #2: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTING IN RACIALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE FAMILIES

Below are tips shared by adults who have had the experience of being raised in racially and culturally diverse families sharing practical things parents can do to help children feel a greater sense of belonging and connection to their race, culture and/or ethnicity.

- Enroll children in activities with people from the child's birth heritage.
- Be especially mindful of diversity in the school the child will be attending as the child will spend so much time there. Visit the school in advance and you can also find statistical data on the Department of Education website.
- Consider moving to or living near neighborhoods where people look and/or speak like the child.
- Seek hair and skin care advice and products from the child's community of origin. Connect your child to people and places where they can learn about these things, such as barber shops and beauty salons. (While best done in person, the internet is also a resource.)
- Expose the child to the language, food, art, and customs of their birth heritage, both inside and outside of your home.
- Positively influence the child with books, movies, current events, and music that represent the child's race and or culture. Do this in ways that engage and open discussions-this is an active not passive process, unlike leaving books on a shelf.
- While parenting the child:
 - ✓ Highlight the contributions and resilience of people from the child's race or culture that has been demonstrated in history.
 - ✓ Acknowledge racism, discrimination, oppression, and historical trauma. This involves understanding inequitable outcomes in modern America for people of color. Recognize the reality of poorer educational outcomes in communities of color, health disparities, like mortality rates being highest for Black children, the wealth gap between minorities and majority groups, and a disproportionate representation of people of color in the criminal justice and foster care systems.
 - ✓ Develop your own comfort in having tough conversations about the life skills children of color need, such as how to interact with the police, or in a store, or the possibility of women of color being oversexualized. Keep these discussions concrete, clear and accurate.



- ✓ Allow for a range of reactions to come up, such as anger, sadness, pride, pushing away, overidentifying, etc.
- ✓ If you do not have comfort, skill, or knowledge in these topics, it is ok and even advisable to bring in someone who does.

