

Racial Literacy

A big welcome back from the Easter break to our current and new families, we hope you had a lovely half term. To the families who are new, My name is Chloe, I'm the Early Help Support Worker and I will be uploading a post on to your child's journal every fortnight, if there's any advice you feel you need supporting with please do not hesitate to contact me, my email and phone number are always available on the bottom of the parenting posts.

Today's Parenting Post is Racial Literacy-

Recently, Norcot Early Years Centre received training on Racial Literacy through an External Provider- Andrea O'Niel and Amanda Walcott-Barnett, we thought the information we have learnt could help support our families to have an understanding how racism affects young children, to be able to talk about this subject with your children, what we have in place to support that racism doesn't happen within our Centre and how you can approach if you happen to experience racism.

What age do children understand race?

You might be tempted to put off talking about race until your child is much older. Maybe you think they're too little or you don't want to put ideas in their head. But the truth is that even very young kids are picking up messages about race and ethnicity every single day, from all around us. After all, race can affect everything from where people live to who works certain jobs, or who appears more regularly in books, movies and TV shows.

According to research, even babies at 3 months old can tell different races apart. However, young babies don't attach any specific emotion or value judgement to race. That happens over time, based on what we learn from our environment. So as a parent, you should be proactive about tackling negative mindsets from early on.

True or False Statements:

Q. Racism is where an adult or child has a range of horrible and untrue thoughts about another group. True or false?

A. False. Racism is not just mean things said or done by one person to another because of their race. Racism can be seen as a system of advantages and disadvantages based on race. It involves policies, practices, ideologies, systems, institutions and laws. These produce, allow and maintain the widespread unfair treatment of racially minoritised people. Racism is all around us; it can be seen in beauty standards, exclusions rates, and in the media. The impact of racism affects our everyday lives, whether we are aware of it or not

Q. Children in early years cannot express racial preferences. True or false?

A. False. Children become aware of race at an early age. Babies as young as three months old display a preference for their own ethnic group when shown the faces

of people from a range of ethnic groups. Why should we think about racism in the early years? Additionally, children as young as two years of age are able to make judgements about people's behaviours based on race, and by five years of age children can display play-based racial preferences.

Q. Young children can only display racism if they are taught it at home. True or false?

A. False. A child's beliefs about race and identity are developed from their surroundings and what they see and hear every day. As they develop, children are motivated to conform to the social and cultural norms around them. By the age of six, children are able to label an individual's perceived racial group. At this age, children are also able to attach positive and negative characteristics to different racial groups. This affects how they compare their own race to the race of others.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRZPw-9sJtQ> – this is a powerful clip that shows the “Doll test” which is a psychological experiment where Children select a Black or White doll that best fitted names positive or negative attributes. The study found that the majority of children attributed positive characteristics, such as ‘nice’ and ‘pretty’, to the White dolls and negative characteristics to the Black dolls. The study also found that the children preferred the White doll

How we at Norcot Early Years address the impact of Racism on Children

- **Creating Inclusive Environments:** The use of diverse and inclusive teaching materials and ensuring representation of staff. Ensuring that the learning environment reflects the diversity of cultures
- **Education and Training:** Educators and caregivers need ongoing training on anti-racism, cultural competency, and how to support children who have experienced racism. Ongoing professional development for staff on cultural competence, anti-racism, and unconscious bias
- **Supporting Families:** Engaging with families from diverse backgrounds, offering support, and providing resources
- **Promoting Positive Racial Identity:** Encouraging children to take pride in their racial and ethnic identities can boost self-esteem and resilience against the negative effects of racism.
- **Policy and Advocacy:** Advocating for policies that address systemic racism and promote equity in education, healthcare, and other areas. Clearly communicating our setting's commitment to anti-discrimination and outline the steps taken to address any incidents of racism or bias.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Enable families to provide feedback on their experiences and suggestions for improvement.
- **Language Support:** Provide materials and communication in multiple languages, employ translators or multilingual staff to facilitate communication

- **Learn About the Communities:** learn about the cultural backgrounds, traditions, and values of the families you serve.
- **Celebrate Multicultural Events:** Celebrate a wide range of cultural and religious festivals and events, inviting families to share their traditions
- **Partnerships with Community Organizations:** Build partnerships with local community organizations, cultural groups, and religious institutions that serve diverse communities.
- **Community Resources and Services:** Provide families with information about community resources and services
- **Parent Education:** Offer workshops and seminars on topics of interest to families, such as child development, bilingualism, and navigating the education system
- **Cultural Exchange Events:** Organize events that encourage cultural exchange and learning among families from different backgrounds
- **Lead by Example:** Staff should model inclusivity, respect, and appreciation for all cultures in their interactions with children and families.

Additional Information

Resources/ Social Media

Social Media Accounts to Follow-

Black Nursery Manager Instagram @theblacknurserymanager

The Conscious Kid Instagram @theconsciouskid

Jamal Carly Instagram @Jamal.Carly

JossyCare Instagram @JossyCare

Laura Henry-Allain Twitter (X) @IamLauraHenry

Uju's blog Instagram, Twitter (X) and Facebook @babesabouttown

Websites- The Conscious Kid- www.consciouskid.org Teaching

Tolerance- www.learningforjustice.org Project

Embrace- www.projectembrace.org.uk How to talk to toddlers and young children about race, racism & religion - BBC Tiny Happy People

Rachel, our Curriculum Lead will be uploading a Curriculum Post on to your child's Tapestry Journal sharing activities and suggestions to support racial socialisation.

We hope this post has stimulated your thinking and given you a good starting point to support your children to think about race. We understand that this post could be a sensitive subject and we are always here to offer support for you. If you would like to discuss anything please contact me either by email- cbrown@norcot.reading.sch.uk or telephone- 07483368773