Parenting in Racially, Culturally, and Ethnically Diverse Adoptive Families

In the past, the prevailing advice for parents who adopted children and youth of a race, culture, or ethnicity different from theirs was to love and raise them from a "colorblind" perspective,[1] as if the races, cultures, and ethnicities of the young people were not an important part of their identities. But adults who were raised with this approach and other experts say that when parents ignore their child's racial, cultural, and ethnic origins, the journey to a healthy identity can be lonely, confusing, and even traumatic. Parenting a child who comes from a different racial, cultural, or ethnic background from your own requires continuous learning, since you will not have the same life experiences as your child.

[1] "Colorblindness" is a racial ideology that involves treating people equally without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. It is problematic because it minimizes racism, systemic inequities, and the impact of race on one's outcomes. It also dismisses crucial elements of an individual's identity.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Child Welfare Information Gateway
PROTECTING CHILDREN ■ STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Children's Bureau
An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

Learning about another culture is a process that requires ongoing work, open-mindedness, and a commitment to growth. Understanding and acknowledging differences in race, culture, and ethnicity and playing an active role in creating a home and family life that reflect your child's heritage are critical steps in parenting in diverse adoptive families.

This factsheet provides information to help you and your family support your child in developing a healthy racial, cultural, and ethnic identity and live a vibrant multicultural life. It discusses the importance of examining your thoughts and biases, as well as those of your whole family, and preparing your child to live in a society where race has a major impact on individual lives.

Acknowledgement

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Defining Racially, Culturally, and Ethnically Diverse Adoptive Families

An adoption in which adoptive parents are of a different race, culture, and/or ethnicity from their children is usually referred to as a "transracial adoption" or "transcultural adoption." Adoption agencies, your child's caseworker, or other child welfare professionals may use these terms when discussing relevant training or services to support your family. But, for many people, these terms do not address the depth or complexities associated with their lived experience. For the purposes of this publication, we use "racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse families" to best describe the common realities of people raised in such families.

Race, culture, and ethnicity are terms that people often confuse, but they are different. **Race** is a social construct used to group people. It is not based on genetics or science, and it is often based on physical appearance, social factors, and cultural background. **Culture** is taught to us by other human beings. Generally speaking, we learn culture by speaking with and learning from our elders, people who pass down and share information, generation to generation. **Ethnicity** refers to one's racial, national, Tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural background. Ethnicity is typically defined by a group's cultural identity, while race is typically determined by physical traits.

For more terms related to race, culture, and ethnicity, see the glossary at the end of this publication.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STARTING A MULTICULTURAL FAMILY

Starting a multicultural family by adopting a young person with a different racial, cultural, or ethnic background from your own is a big decision that requires a lot of soul searching and preparation before adoption even occurs. Multicultural adoptions can be great opportunities for both adoptive parents and adopted youth to learn, grow, and embrace a rich, multicultural lifestyle. However, these types of adoptions can create challenges for adopted youth, such as a lack of connection to their birth culture, challenges developing or understanding their identity, or even racism from adoptive relatives.

It is easy for well-intentioned adoptive families to take on a "love is enough" perspective, but the reality is that for your child to thrive, you need to help them embrace their racial, cultural, and ethnic identities and navigate a world where racism can impact daily life. This involves extensive, ongoing work and a commitment to lifelong learning.

> "To me, when I think of what does a multicultural family look like, it looks as if everyone comes together with their different cultural and racial backgrounds but are respected and acknowledged and their activities that are associated with their cultures are done."—Antonica, young person who experienced living with families of different racial and cultural backgrounds

PREADOPTION SOUL SEARCHING

Consider asking yourself some of the following questions to begin thinking about what it means to start a multicultural family:

- Am I willing to put in the work to learn and embrace a race, culture, or ethnicity different from my own, beginning far before an adoption occurs?
- Am I ready to ask questions and listen so I can understand my child's needs?
- Do I have meaningful, authentic connections or relationships in my daily life with people who share my child's racial, cultural, or ethnic background?
- Am I willing to continue to build new relationships with people who share my child's race, culture, and ethnicity, including members of their birth family and community?
- Am I willing to have difficult conversations about the challenges that my child will face, including racism and discrimination, and help them navigate those challenges?
- Am I willing to be an unconditional champion for my child as they navigate challenges both within and outside of the home?
- Do I currently live in a diverse community where my child can see their race, culture, and ethnicity represented? If not, am I willing to potentially relocate?
- Am I willing to support my child as they develop their identity, even if it means they choose to distance themselves from me or form bonds with relatives and mentors other than me?

- How will my immediate and extended family respond to the adoption? Will they enthusiastically support and embrace my new multicultural and multiracial family? How will I support my child if they don't?
- Does my community value racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity, and will they affirm my adopted child?

Starting a multicultural family involves examining the thoughts and feelings of your network of immediate and extended family and friends. Since these people will be in your child's life, they also need to be ready to embrace them for who they are. If anyone in your extended family cannot accept your child as a family member, you should be prepared to reduce or eliminate contact with that person, because every young person deserves to be safe from racism in the haven of their family. Creating a strong family identity requires that all members feel included.

You will also need to be ready to educate your extended family about the different life experiences of your child. For example, because of White privilege, White relatives may not realize that minoritized children and youth do not experience many of the same advantages that White children experience

Adoption should be a mutual decision between the family and the young person being adopted whenever possible. Adoption is a big life change regardless of race, and when the family comes from a different racial, cultural, or ethnic group, a young person may have additional reservations. As you explore your adoption options, start having discussions about race, culture, and ethnicity right away. You may be able to ease potential hesitation by asking the young person about their background and family, letting them know you value their individual story, and making clear your commitment to embracing their racial, cultural, and ethnic identity. You should also express your commitment to fighting racism, which includes being an ally, recognizing your own privilege, and continuing to learn. It is important to set the tone early in any foster or adoptive relationship by talking about needs and asking what you can do to make the environment better for the young person. The National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster and Adoptive Parents has a video with tips for supporting children and youth as they transition from one home to another.

> "I have had a hard time explaining to my parents that my kids do not enjoy some of the same privileges that White children with White parents (like my nieces and nephews) experience. For example, my mom will say, 'Just give him your credit card when he goes to the store.' And I've had to explain that I do not want to send a Hispanic male teenager in to a store with a credit card that has Jewish female name on it. I want to protect him from being questioned or accused of stealing the card."—Parent who adopted children of a different racial and cultural background

PUTTING IN WORK AS A WHOLE FAMILY

Adopting a child from a different race, culture, or ethnicity requires work from the whole family, not just the parents. All family members need to be ready to look inward, learn about race, and talk about race. They especially need to be ready to educate themselves on the background, traditions, and challenges of the race, culture, and ethnicity of their new family member so they are ready to incorporate their identity into the whole family.

One of the best things you can do to prepare for a prospective adoption is to start learning as much as you can. Read books and articles, watch videos, listen to podcasts, and explore other resources. Some suggested resources are listed at the end of this publication. In addition to learning about your child's race, culture, and ethnicity, it is important to explore the history of race, power, privilege, and oppression in the United States. You will also need to explore unconscious bias and the ways in which you may be unintentionally stereotyping various groups. The University of California San Francisco offers an unconscious bias training to help you and your family understand, assess, and address unconscious bias.

For younger children who are gaining a new sibling, consider age-appropriate ways to talk to them about race and differences they may notice. Keep things positive and emphasize that diversity is a good thing. The following section provides tips for talking about race and embracing a new family lifestyle.

> "If you're going to love a child that is not the same race or culture, then you also have to be willing to be an advocate, a champion. . .Are you willing to challenge your family members or your friends and their ideologies and their beliefs?"— Justin, young person who experienced living with families of different racial and cultural backgrounds

STRATEGIES FOR EMBRACING LIFE AS A RACIALLY, CULTURALLY, AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE FAMILY

Embracing a multicultural lifestyle is more a daily philosophy than a step-by-step checklist to follow. It also requires adaptability because many young people have different needs. For example, a 2-year-old may need more support understanding their race and identity than a 16-year-old who grew up fully immersed in their birth culture. It is important to tailor your approach to your child's unique experience and understand that it will take time to develop trust and understanding.

> "To a parent, my advice would be this: Be patient. Please understand that when the youth is coming into your home that is of a different race or cultural background than you, please be patient because you might not even know the walk of life that this young person had to go on to get here. So be patient with them. Understand that if they do seem guarded at first, that it is okay. Still give them time."
> —Antonica, young person who experienced living with families of different racial and cultural backgrounds

The following provides concrete tips for embracing your multiracial and multicultural family and helping your child embrace their background.

TALKING ABOUT RACE, CULTURE, AND ETHNICITY

Talking about race and culture can be difficult, but it's especially important for adoptive parents of children and youth from a background different from their own. If you assume there are no differences between races, cultures, and ethnicities, or shouldn't be, you may create relational distance, silence, and mistrust between you and your child. Talk about race and your child's cultural heritage in positive terms, beginning when your child is young or whenever your child joins your family. By the time your child starts school, they will need tools to answer questions by themselves, including appropriate racial terms. You can make them aware of terms that are inappropriate and unacceptable so that they can recognize them and consider how to respond.

If you start the conversation when your child is young, they will have a level of comfort when they're older in discussing more complex issues, coping skills, and the risks of living in a society where race affects how people are treated. It may be helpful to discuss key historical events around race, culture, and ethnicity. Use these events to provide context for the racism they encounter.

Visit the Talking About Race webpage on the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) website for digital tools and other resources to help you have constructive conversations on race topics, including bias, antiracism, racial identity, and systemic oppression. Although NMAAHC focuses on African American culture, many of the resources and concepts apply broadly across race, culture, and ethnicity.

SUPPORTING IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Helping your child develop their identity is among the most important roles you'll play in parenting a young person. Identity, including racial, cultural, and ethnic identity, develops over time and in response to a variety of experiences, both within and outside the family. It is critical that your individual identity does not dominate your child's understanding of their identity. Children and youth should never feel like they are the exception in their own life.

> "I have been placed with several other families that did not share the same ethnicity, race, or culture as me, but going through that experience, I have learned that there are some who are willing to listen and understand, and there are those who are just like, 'No, you're going to do this my way. This is my family. You're coming into my family. You have no choice but to accept this.' That is a dangerous situation, and that is not helping the youth learn more about themselves."—Antonica, young person who experienced living with families of different racial and cultural backgrounds

To help your child on this journey, consider the following strategies:

- **Ask questions.** One of the best things you can do for your child is express genuine curiosity about their racial, cultural, and ethnic experience. For young children, encourage discussions about the differences they notice among family and friends. For older youth, ask about their past and what their race, culture, and ethnicity mean to them. Asking and listening can help them feel understood and have their needs met.
- **Go beyond superficial cultural differences.** Merely celebrating Chinese New Year or Kwanzaa, eating Ethiopian food, or watching a movie with Hispanic and Latino characters does not provide the human connections required for your child to build and maintain a real sense of belonging to and ownership of their cultural heritage.
- **Nurture connections with people who share your child's racial, cultural, and ethnic identity.** As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child. You are doing your child a disservice if that village is not representative of their entire identity. It may be difficult for children and youth to develop a healthy sense of self without immersion in the culture of their birth families and communities. This may include maintaining relationships with members of the young person's birth family. More information is available in Child Welfare Information Gateway's *Helping Your Adopted Children Maintain Important Relationships With Family*.
- **Integrate culturally relevant traditions, holidays, and rituals into daily home life for the whole family.** This will help your child know that their cultural traditions are valued and considered as important as your own. Be sure to ask your child what traditions are important to them. Outside of holidays or formal gatherings, they may value informal traditions, such a big family dinner on Sundays or a backyard barbecue in the summer. Also, consider buying toys and books, listening to music, and watching movies that reflect your child's heritage.

- **Provide many and differing avenues for your child to express themselves and their needs.** It is not unusual for children and youth involved with child welfare to chameleon, or adopt different behaviors or identities to blend into different settings and family dynamics. Giving them as many ways and opportunities as possible to express themselves can let them know it is okay to be themselves and speak up about what they need without fear of negative consequences.

> "There were a lot of moments where people's biases really did play into how I had to react as a person. . . I didn't want to make anyone else uncomfortable, even though I was constantly being made to feel uncomfortable about who I was or what I needed. And so that's not a great experience at all."—Justin, young person who experienced living with families of different racial and cultural backgrounds

- **Talk to your child about racism.** It is very important to recognize that racism exists. Children and youth of color may need help recognizing racist behavior so that they know that it is wrong and not the fault of the person experiencing the behaviors. You should also discuss racism with older youth so you can understand their experience and support them when they encounter it. For cultures that have been historically oppressed and mistreated, healthy identity development requires understanding this history and developing coping skills that build resilience against hurtful societal messages. Youth need positive images and messages about their history and their communities to counterbalance negativity and institutional racism, and they need buy-in and engagement from their entire family. More information about preparing your child for racism is available in the Developing Strategies to Prepare Your Child for Racism section of this publication.
- **Strive to understand what life is like on a day-to-day basis for your child.** Know the possible danger that your child faces, particularly as a teenager or young adult of color (e.g., microaggressions, bullying by classmates, unfair punishment in school, being pulled over by the police).
- **Be mindful of age.** Forming a racial identity is an individual journey impacted by age and background. Children and youth will have varying connections to, memories of, and feelings toward their birth communities, and they will be at different stages of identity development. Younger children may require help understanding their identity, while older youth may benefit from you expressing curiosity and learning about the identity they have developed over the years, which may have evolved and changed over time.
- **Understand your own identity and how it may influence your child.** To help your child understand their racial and cultural identity, you need to understand your own. Especially for parents who are part of the dominant culture, developing that awareness takes self-exploration, understanding the environment in which you live, and considering what that means

for the needs of your child. Exploring the realities of race and the differences between races and how they impact individual lives in your culture will help you understand your own biases and prejudices. This may allow you to act in ways that can transform your family's usual way of doing things.

- **Respect and acknowledge *all* facets of your child's identity.** While it is essential to acknowledge your child's racial and cultural identity, make sure that it is not the only identity you are acknowledging. By overly emphasizing race, culture, or ethnicity, you run the risk of isolating your child or making them feel as though their race, culture, or ethnicity is more important than their individual identity. Parents should strive to embrace and understand everything that makes a young person who they are as an individual, including their personalities, hobbies, and interests.

> "My momma was that one who was standing in the bathroom with me watching me do my hair. She was always so fascinated about how I did my hair. She genuinely loved it. She always used to say she felt bad she couldn't help me because she couldn't understand what she was supposed to do or the type of products I was supposed to use for my hair. But she was always the one to tell me, whatever I needed, she would get it for me. She will go with me. She was willing to be that active part of my life."—Antonica, young person who experienced living with families of different racial and cultural backgrounds

Training and Related Skills for Parenting in Racially, Culturally, and Ethnically Diverse Families

The National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster and Adoptive Parents (NTDC) is a free, comprehensive curriculum that addresses separation, loss, grief, trauma, and differences of race and culture in adoption and foster care. It is designed for families who are adopting through an intercountry or private domestic process as well as those fostering or adopting in or from the public child welfare system. Adoptive families who participate in the NTDC training program can expect to develop insights and strategies for parenting in diverse families.

The curriculum includes a self-assessment for families who are preparing to become foster, kinship, or adoptive parents; a classroom-based training designed to teach the foundations of parenting children and youth who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss; and a "Right-Time" training designed to provide accessible, ongoing access to tools and information as families, children, and youth grow.

MAKING CONNECTIONS WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

As a parent, you can make sure that you and your child have as many opportunities as possible to interact with people of your child's race, culture, and ethnicity. Your child may be more likely to feel connected and comfortable when their circle of playmates, peers, and trusted adults includes people who look like them, and you can learn a lot about your child's cultural community by being with other parents and adults who share your child's race, culture, or ethnicity. When possible, this may involve making connections with your child's birth family and community.

Our identities are influenced by exposure to different people and settings. As young people grow up, they internalize what they see and what they experience. Ensuring they are surrounded by people who share their background can help them internalize the language, values, and behaviors of their racial, cultural, or ethnic group. It can also allow them to codeswitch, or adjust their behavior and interactions with others, as they need or choose. They can learn important life lessons from adults of their same race, culture, or ethnicity about being a person of that background in American society. They may experience—with both young people and adults—positive social interactions and behaviors that can help them understand and believe they are fully members of their racial group, rather than feeling like outsiders.

Take a look at your community and surroundings and ask yourself how reflective it is of your child and whether it is welcoming and comfortable for your child and family. This involves looking at your extended environment—for example, your neighborhood, stores where you shop, community organizations and social groups, places of worship, health-care providers, and schools. Schools are particularly important as most children and youth spend a significant portion of their developmental years in these academic settings—interacting with peers, making friends, and learning from teachers and others. Consider all aspects of your child's school experience, including the curriculum, faculty, student diversity, and culture of inclusiveness, to determine what kind of fit the school will be for your child.

> "You definitely have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable, especially in the beginning stages. It definitely is harder before it gets easier for parents or caregivers. I would say my best advice is understand that you can't be everything for them, and that is okay, but the more you show that you can be a support and a bridge to other resources and other avenues and to other people, I guarantee your young person will appreciate you for that."—Justin, young person who experienced living with families of different racial and cultural backgrounds

Awareness of visible racial and ethnic differences starts at an early age. It's important to have connections to people who look like your child so your child doesn't assume you prefer people of your own race. Examining and reflecting on the diversity of your network and community is something that should occur well before an adoption. If your life and social activities do not already include significant connections to people who are the same race, culture, or ethnicity as your child, it will take time to create and nurture these connections. Suggestions for doing this include the following:

- Find a local community organization or a social, religious, or recreational group that includes individuals of all ages who share your child's racial, cultural, or ethnic background and where you can participate as a family on a regular basis.
- Explore relationships with your child's birth family, extended family, and home community. Navigating relationships with birth families can be challenging, but it can be enriching for your child to know where they come from.
- Ask your child what activities they like to do, places they like to go, and organizations they enjoy being part of.
- Ensure your usual social activities include people whose race, culture, and ethnicity are different from yours. You may also want to identify an informal mentor for yourself from your child's racial, cultural, or ethnic group. This can be a great opportunity to lean on existing meaningful relationships you have with friends and family from diverse backgrounds.
- Locate a specific place in your community—such as a school or playground or a social group, such as a parent network—where your child will be able to play or spend time with other children and youth of different races and backgrounds. You can also make connections with these parents. While there is also great benefit to adoptive parent groups, it is important not to limit your connections to those parents.
- Create a list of types of professionals you may need as a parent (e.g., pediatricians, dentists, racially specific hair care salons, child care providers) and review this list to see where you can find providers of your child's heritage to meet your family's needs. Asking other parents of your child's race, culture, or ethnicity for recommendations can be a great way to start conversations that may lead to making connections.
- Find TV shows, podcasts, or books that cater to members of your child's race or ethnicity—and be sure to watch, listen to, or read them regularly. This may even mean learning a new language. Begin collecting books, family videos, and art for your home that reflect your child's culture and diverse families and people in general.

> "Accept that sometimes you might misread a situation or just plain 'get it wrong' when trying to understand your kid's experience. Have some humility in these cases. Apologize and keep learning."—Parent who adopted children of a different racial and cultural background

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR RACISM

Societies use race to create and reinforce racism, including class systems of power and privilege that benefit some and exclude or deny others. Furthermore, American society's historic preference for racial sameness in families prejudges racially and culturally diverse families. Strangers may make remarks or ask questions about your family because they see that you and your child do not look alike. Others may make racist comments. You need to prepare your child and yourself for both situations.

ADDRESSING AND FIGHTING AGAINST RACISM

Your job as a parent is to be part of difficult discussions with your child and to let them know it's okay to openly struggle with topics related to race. It is important to talk with your child about race and racism before they experience prejudice. For young people of color, this is a matter of when, not if. You may worry that if you point out differences or talk about racism, your child will feel less connected to you, but if parents are not able to discuss racial bias and differences, their child will be left to grapple with these critical issues alone with a limited worldview.

Your child should learn how to respond to the racism they may experience in different circumstances. For instance, responses to peers may be different from responses to authority figures or adult family members. These responses may range from ignoring the comment to seeking help or support from others to confronting the person or the system.

You are an important role model for your child against the effects of racism. Some strategies to address and fight against racism include the following:

- Fill your child with positive remarks and feelings about who they are and help them practice responding to racist comments.
- Talk about race and your child's cultural heritage in positive terms beginning when your child is young or when your child joins your family. This may help to build self-esteem that your child can draw on when they are older.
- Educate yourself and your child about the positive values of your child's racial, cultural, and ethnic history. Point out positive role models who share the same race, culture, or ethnicity as your child.
- Make clear your commitment to fight racism and teach antiracism as a whole family value. Work with your family to promote equality across the board—not just when it involves your child.
- Make a clear and visible commitment to authentically embracing and supporting people of other races.
- Ask about and listen to your child's experience with racism. This can let them know you are an advocate they can go to when they encounter racism.

Visit the NMAAHC Being Antiracist webpage to learn about types of racism, questions to ask yourself, and how to handle racist situations. For additional learning materials on antiracism, including books and essays, visit the website of Ibram X. Kendi, one of America's foremost historians and leading voices on antiracism.

> "I've seen so many people talk about—and there's some experiences that I've experienced as well—where you feel safe at home where love, acceptance, and understanding is promoted but not when you step foot outside of the home. As people, we all deserve to feel safe from bias and discrimination, and a young person deserves to know that when they don't feel safe outside of the home, that they will have a champion that will step out into the world with them and help them navigate it."—Justin, young person who experienced living with families of different racial and cultural backgrounds

FAMILY RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

You do not owe anyone the response to any question, but you may give your child, your child's siblings, and yourself permission to handle intrusive questions like "Where did he come from?" and "Whose child is he?" Talk with your child about strategies and responses they might want to try. You may not be with your child when they encounter others' questions or remarks, so it's important that they know appropriate ways to respond.

The *W.I.S.E. Up! Powerbook* curriculum provides practical guidance and specific examples that teach school-age children how to **W**(alk away), **I**(gnore), **S**(hare), or **E**(ducate) in response to questions or remarks from others. The goal of this curriculum is to teach children and youth that they have control over how they respond to questions about their adoption experience. By working together to come up with a range of ideas about handling attention and curiosity from others, children, youth, and parents can be allies, reinforcing a feeling of belonging, and counteracting the message of isolation that can otherwise undermine a young person's sense of connection.

CONCLUSION

As the adoptive parent to a young person of another race, culture, or ethnicity, you will need to make ongoing, conscious efforts both inside and outside of your home to meet your child's needs and help them develop a healthy racial, cultural, and ethnic identity. You will never fully understand what life is like for someone of a different race, culture, or ethnicity, but one of the best things you can do for your child is listen and be willing to learn. Develop comfortable ways to talk with your child in age-appropriate conversations about diversity. Such conversations may support your diverse family's sense of unity, especially if your child feels isolated because they look different or they are in situations where they feel they need to explain or even defend the composition of their family. Nurture connections with people who share your child's race, culture, and ethnicity, including their birth family and members of their community when possible. If, together, your family develops a family identity that celebrates the individual members and the strengths of the unit, you and your child will be better prepared to face the challenges that the outside world may present.

GLOSSARY

The following terms are helpful to know when parenting in a racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse family:

Allyship: This is the role of actively supporting and advocating for the rights of a minority group as someone who is not a member of that group.

Code-switching: Code-switching involves adjusting your speech, appearance, behavior, and expression in response to different groups and settings. This adjustment for the comfort of others is often in exchange for fair treatment, quality service, and employment opportunities.

Colorblind: Colorblindness is a racial ideology that involves treating people equally without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. It is problematic because it minimizes racism, systemic inequities, and the impact of race on one's outcomes. It also dismisses crucial elements of an individual's identity.

Colorism: This is discrimination based on skin color and valuing one skin color or shade over another, whether within your family, racial or cultural group, or across groups. "The Difference Between Racism and Colorism" discusses the impact skin color has on everyday life.

Cultural humility: Cultural humility includes recognizing of the importance of learning about, honoring, and incorporating your child's cultural identities; respecting families from varying races, religions, ethnicities, and economic statuses; understanding that you are always evolving and must remain open to new ideas; respecting differences in values of young people and birth families; and acknowledging that learning about other cultures is an ongoing process.

Culture: Culture is taught to us by other human beings. We learn our culture by speaking with and learning from our elders and other people who pass down and share information, often from generation to generation.

Diversity: This is the presence of differences among people with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, age, class, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and other characteristics.

Equity: Equity is the fair treatment of all while striving to identify and eliminate inequities and barriers. Equity differs from equality because it recognizes that people have different circumstances and require different resources, access, and opportunities to achieve equal outcomes.

Ethnicity: Ethnicity refers to one's racial, national, Tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural background. Ethnicity is typically defined by a group's cultural identity, while race is typically determined by physical traits.

Implicit bias/unconscious bias: Used interchangeably, implicit and unconscious bias are unconscious attitudes toward others often based on stereotypes. We all carry implicit bias and must learn to recognize it in ourselves to better understand and represent children and youth. Project Implicit offers free online tests that may reveal information you do not know about your own biases.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the state of being included within a group or structure. ("Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance."—Verna Myers)

Intercountry adoption: An adoption in which adoptive parents adopt a young person from a country other than their own through permanent legal means and then bring that young person to their country of residence. More information on this type of adoption is available in Information Gateway's *Intercountry Adoption: What Do I Need to Know?*

Microaggressions: Microaggressions are common daily insults, invalidations, slights, or attitudes that communicate hostile racial judgments. They can be intentional or unintentional and can focus on race, culture, ethnicity, and adoption status. "If Microaggressions Happened to White People" shows how people of color face racial microaggressions every day.

Multiracial/multicultural parenting: This is an approach to parenting children and youth from different racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds that honors your child's race, culture, and ethnicity in your existing family system, identifies strategies to help your child develop a positive and proud identity, and helps your child and family prepare for racism.

Race: Race is a socially defined concept used to give groups of people more power than others. Race is not based on genetics or science; however, it is sometimes used to designate groups of the human population with common physical characteristics, ancestry, or language.

Racial profiling: This occurs when someone is suspected of an offense based on their race, culture, or ethnicity rather than actual evidence.

Transracial adoption: Transracial adoption is an adoption in which the adoptive parents are of a different race, culture, and/or ethnicity from the child who is adopted.

White privilege: This is the societal privilege that benefits White people and provides them advantages that non-White people do not experience.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"25 Helpful Resources for Transracial Adoptive Families" includes links to books, podcasts, articles, videos, films, and TV series as well as organizations to follow on social media.

"Color Blind or Color Brave" is a TED Talk from finance executive Mellody Hobson about the importance of speaking openly about race.

EmbraceRace provides parents with articles, webinars, action guides, podcasts, and other resources to meet the challenges they face raising children and youth of color in a world where race matters.

NPR's *Code Switch* podcast covers the overlap of race, ethnicity, and culture—how they play out in our lives and communities.

Pact, an Adoption Alliance offers resources, support, and community for adoptive families to children and youth of color.

"Proactive Engagement: The Adoptive Parent's Responsibility When Parenting a Child of a Different Race" (National Council for Adoption) provides information about parenting children and youth of different age groups and suggests books, articles, tip sheets, and more for additional information.

Social Justice Parenting offers guidance for parenting as a form of activism and encourages parents to acknowledge their

influence in developing compassionate, socially conscious kids.

Transracial Parenting Training (North American Council on Adoptable Children) provides parents with training on race and cultural issues involved in adopting a young person of another race or culture.

PERSONAL ANECDOTES

"A Mother Reflects on Privilege, Adoption and Parenting 'Without Perfection'" [audio] features one adoptive mother's story about how raising two Black sons—one adopted from foster care and the other from Haiti—and two White birth daughters helped her understand white privilege.

"Adopted Child: Strangers Asking Questions" [video] provides tips on how to respond when strangers ask intrusive questions about your child, which sometimes means providing no response at all.

"Talking About Race With Our Children, Whatever Their Race" offers suggestions about raising children and youth of another race from a White adoptive mother of a Latina daughter and a Black son.

The Adoptee Next Door [podcast] features one-on-one conversations between Angela Tucker, a Black woman adopted by White parents, and transracially adopted youth with the goal to elevate the adoptee voice and provide trustworthy open-source content to the public.

"The Realities of Raising a Kid of a Different Race" discusses possible dangers children and youth of color encounter in their daily lives.

"Transracial & Transcultural Adoption: Preservation, Policy, and a Personal Perspective" provides historic background of intercountry adoption in the United States and the personal story of an African American woman who was raised in a multiracial and multicultural family and is now parenting in a multicultural family.

"Transracial Adoption: Love Is Just the Beginning" shares how one family handles being a family of African American, Native American, Latino, and European American individuals.

"White Parents, Raising Black Children - Uncomfortable Conversations With a Black Man - Ep. 6" [video] features a conversation with a multiracial family about their struggles and lessons learned.

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