

Summer Wellness Challenge



Sesame Street Town Hall: How to Explain Racism to Kids

Directions & Script for Elementary School Students

Children as young as infants start to recognize race, and parents can use recent events as an opportunity to have honest and simple conversations with your child about racism to set a foundation for your child to gain insight and awareness. Take time as a family to have a discussion around similarities and differences to help stand up against racism. The Sesame Street Racism Town Hall uses age appropriate language to break down the recent protests occurring in our nation, defining racism and exploring ways to be empathetic and understanding. Join Big Bird; Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms; Dr. Nia Heard-Garris, the Minority, Health Equity & Inclusion Chair at American Academy of Pediatrics; Dr. Jeanette Betancourt, the Senior Vice President for U.S. Social Impact at Sesame Workshop and CNN's Van Jones and Erica Hill as they take questions from the community addressing racism and the nationwide protests.

STEP 1 – Watch the Video, “Sesame Street Racism Town Hall” (21:28 minutes)

Watch the entire video as a family and pause for discussions throughout the video to help your child understand the complex topics being discussed throughout the Town Hall. Below are some specific topic areas with associated time stamps to help guide your family discussion.

- Defining racism and protests (0 – 3:47 min)
- Explaining why some people are treated differently because of their race (8:06 – 9:32 min) and (7:01 – 8:05 min)
- Explaining the difference between “Black Lives Matter” and “All Lives Matter” (9:42 – 10:49 min)
- Parents raising children of color – what do you tell your children? (10:50 – 12:03 min)
- Tips for beginning to talk about racism and protests with young children (14:25 – 15:11 min), (12:17 min – 13:45 min) and (18:44 – 19:33 min)
- Scientific explanation on why people have different skin colors (15:21 – 16:20 min)

Key takeaways from the video:

- When you see someone saying or doing something wrong, let that person know it is wrong – say it with love and be a role model for your peers.
- People put other people down when they really feel bad about themselves and they are trying to make themselves feel better – but if people really loved themselves, they would never need to put others down.

Chaet, A. (2020, June 06). Retrieved June 22, 2020, from <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/06/app-news-section/cnn-sesame-street-race-town-hall-app-june-6-2020-app/index.html>

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- You can't treat people the way they treat you, you must treat people the way you want to be treated.
- Sometimes when someone is being mean and hateful, they are hurting inside and don't have any other way to express it.
- There is a history in this country, especially for black people in this country, that is not like any other race – black people are the only race of people who came to this country enslaved. All races need to be respected, and when black people are being unfairly targeted very publicly it is important to speak out about it.
- Even when we don't have all the answers as parents, it is important to sit with your children and listen and let them feel and express their emotions.
- For young children it is best to start with history and provide context – “Black people from countries in Africa were brought to this country as unpaid workers, slaves, and that was unfair, and they were treated poorly, and this led to where we are now.”
- People have different skin colors because of a pigment in our skin called melanin, and the amount each person has changes the color of their skin.
- We can work on changing people's hearts and minds. We must do better and stand up together and no one should be treated unfairly.

STEP 2 – Video Discussion

The content discussed in the video may have brought up a lot different and challenging feelings. Take time as a family to discuss your feelings and answer each other's questions as best you can. Reflect on the questions asked in the video and use your newfound knowledge to have a better relationship with yourself and others.

For more information visit www.bchd.org/summerchallenge. Share your family completing the challenges on social media using #BeachCitiesSummerChallenge.

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