



Did you know children from diverse communities have unique experiences that can impact their mental health?

Kids who are picked on, discriminated against or left out because of their racial or ethnic background may be at risk for emotional distress. Harmful effects are often seen through:

- Decreased self-esteem
- Dissatisfaction or confusion with self-identity
- Changes in academic achievement
- Symptoms of depression and anxiety (sadness, hopelessness, worry, fear)

How can you help?

You can proudly teach your children about different cultures and family traditions while preparing them for difficulties they or their friends may experience. Sharing your family background and strengths, along with teaching about others, can help your children build a sense of identity and deeper appreciation of diversity. For children in underrepresented groups, having a strong connection to their cultural background can increase resilience and limit their acceptance of false stereotypes about their race.

Ways to teach children about racial, ethnic and cultural differences

Talk with your children in an age-appropriate way about your family's heritage, including topics on race, background and culture. Here are some ideas:



Find picture books that represent and celebrate various skin tones, hair, etc. [Download suggestions](#) from the American Psychological Association and The Conscious Kid.

You can also visit your local library: [Duval](#), [St. Johns](#), [Nassau](#), [Clay](#) or [Baker](#).



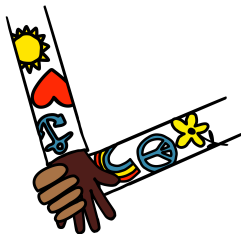
If your family comes from a culture that speaks another language, consider using that language with your child. You can also read books or listen to music in your native language.



Watch movies together that include characters who look like members of your family, in addition to those from different races.



Cook favorite dishes with your children and talk about why they are culturally important to your family.



Remind your children to **respect everyone**, regardless of ethnicity, background or race.

Looking for more ways to create an accepting environment?

Download **Books About Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Traditions** (Available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)) for a list of readings to start and continue these important conversations. Share which books you plan to read on social media, using [#OnOurSleevesJax](#) and [#OnOurSleeves](#)



Books About Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Traditions

Selected from the American Psychological Association Books about Race and Ethnicity list and from The Conscious Kid's book list. See all titles at www.apa.org/press/parents/resources/books and www.theconsciouskid.org/book-lists.

"Leo Can Swim" by Anna McQuinn

Join Leo and his daddy, and several other babies as they all go to swim class.

"Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Children" by Sandra L. Pilgrny

Picture book celebrating the beauty of African American children in their skin, hair and eye colors.

"Palatano Man" by Lucky Diaz and Micah Player

A vibrant picture book celebrating the strength of community and the tastes of summer from Latin Grammy-winning musician Lucky Diaz and celebrated artist Micah Player.

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

A simple and scientific explanation of the three factors that determine skin color: ancestors, the sun and melanin. Includes activities to do with children.

"Alma and How She Got Her Name" by Juana Martinez-Neal

If you ask her, Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela has way too many names: six! How did such a small person wind up with such a large name? Alma turns to Daddy for an answer and learns of Sofia, the grandmother who loved books and flowers; Esperanza, the great-grandmother who longed to travel; José, the grandfather who was an artist; and other namesakes, too.

"Mixed Mia" by Tye Diggs

Meet Mia, a mixed-race kid who has an awesome head of thick, curly hair and lots of energy.

"Princess Truly Series" by Kelly Greenawald

A series of rhythmic rhyming stories that celebrate individuality, girl power and diversity.

"Accordantly: Abuelo and Opa Make Music" by Michael Gerhart

When both grandpas, Abuelo and Opa, visit at the same time, they can't understand each other's language and there is a lot of silence. The grandson's clever thinking helps find a way for everyone to share the day together as two cultures become one family.

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Don't forget to share how you're using *On Our Sleeves* resources! Hit the **reply button** to tell us your *On Our Sleeves* story.

Sincerely,
Wolfson Children's Hospital

The mission of *On Our Sleeves* is to provide every community in America access to free, evidence-informed educational resources necessary for breaking stigmas about child mental health and educating families and advocates. **For more information, visit OnOurSleeves.org.**

To access educational resources and revisit the mission of *On Our Sleeves*®, visit wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves.

Wolfson Children's *On Our Sleeves* is made possible by Robert and Margaret Hill.



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