

Black Lives Matter: What Does It Mean? How Can I Help?

A Guide for Parents



Dear Parents & Caregivers,

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the Black Lives Matter movement and for wanting to pass that knowledge onto your children.

We hope that this video is self-explanatory. But we also realize that there may be some terms or details that require a little more explanation. We wanted to provide that explanation to you, so you can enrich the conversations you have with your kids, while not making the video too long. We hope this parents' guide is helpful.

If you have additional questions, don't hesitate to e-mail us at:
info@kindnessgrowshere.com.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of Kindness Grows Here

Throughout this guide you will see the text of the video in *blue italics* with additional explanations provided in **bold**.

*Disclaimer: This video is intended for children ages 8+. We **strongly** recommend that parents watch it first, and then watch it with their kids.*

We believe that you know your children best. There are certainly children younger than 8 who would understand and grasp the concepts in this video. Kids can surprise us! Regardless of your child’s age, use your judgement as a parent to know what is appropriate for your child.

In recent months, you may have seen the phrase “Black Lives Matter” in many places. You may be wondering what this really means. This video will help you understand how the movement started and its purpose.



In 2013, three brave Black women named, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi started the Black Lives Matter movement. They did this after a Black child named Trayvon Martin was killed and the man who killed him was found not guilty.

Your child may have questions about Trayvon and what happened to him. If you’re not familiar with the details of what happened, you can find a summary here:
<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/florida-teen-trayvon-martin-is-shot-and-killed>

These women started this movement as “an affirmation of Black folks’ humanity, their contributions to this society, and their resilience in the face of deadly oppression.” (Source: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>)

In other words, these women saw Black people being killed and treated horribly, and they felt compelled to remind the world that Black people are people too!

You can talk to your child about other recent events that have demonstrated the threat that Black people face every day because of their skin color: The death of George Floyd, the death of Breonna Taylor, Christian Cooper’s experience in Central Park. There are many others. How much you share, and in what detail will depend on how much your child already knows about issues of racial injustice and their age/level of understanding.

You can also talk with your child about instances of racial injustice that you have witnessed in your daily life. You can ask your child if he/she has ever witnessed Black people being treated badly because of the color of their skin. Talk to them

about how this made them feel, how they reacted, and what their plan would be if they saw this happen again.

The saying, and the movement, “Black Lives Matter” is a call to action. This saying makes it loud and clear to everyone that people with Black skin matter just as much as everyone else. It is important to say this loud and clear because for too long Black people have been treated badly. Sadly, some people still believe that Black lives don’t matter. So, we must remind them that Black lives DO matter.



It is especially important for white allies to show support for the Black Lives Matter movement. It cannot only be Black people who are saying it. White people must say it loud and clear too!

There are many ways that YOU can support this movement and message.

Watching a video like this may be a little overwhelming. Your child may wonder what they can do to help. It is important that they feel empowered to do something. The things we suggest really can make a difference!

First and foremost, treat all people with kindness. And when you see anti-Black racism, stand up, speak out, or get help.

The term “anti-Black racism” may be new to you. It refers to racism directed toward people with Black skin. It refers not only to personal racism directed from one individual to another, but also systemic racism which is perpetuated through laws, policies, and social “norms” which treat Black people differently. This article explores the concept and includes a number of resources you may find helpful:

<https://www.law.com/americanlawyer/2020/06/18/the-crippling-impact-of-anti-black-racism-and-how-allies-can-act-against-it/>

At Kindness Grows Here we believe it is important for children to understand that being kind does not mean being silent. You can read more about what we believe kindness really is, here: <https://kindnessgrowshere.com/2019/12/10/what-does-it-really-mean-to-be-kind/>.

It is important to talk through different scenarios with your kids. Talk about what you would do if you heard someone telling a racist joke, or saw someone hurting someone else, or witnessed someone in a store/restaurant/business acting in a racist way.

Save your pennies and donate to a racial justice organization.

If you're not sure where to donate, here are a few links that make suggestions:

<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2020/6/9/21281538/how-to-donate-to-black-lives-matter-charity>

<https://nymag.com/strategist/article/where-to-donate-for-black-lives-matter.html>

Visit a museum that teaches about the experiences of Black people in America.

Education leads to empathy. It is important that our children understand the history of African Americans in the United States. The injustices we are seeing now are not new. Black people have a long history being treated in unjust ways since they were violently brought here on slave ships in 1619. It is important to understand this history. You may not know all of this history yourself. We are always learning! Make an effort to learn along with your child. You don't need to have all the answers. If your child asks a question and you don't know the answer, you can say, "That's a great question! Let's find the answer together!"

Visiting museums is difficult right now. Many are closed due to COVID-19.

Fortunately, many museums have wonderful on-line resources. Here are four we recommend:

The National Museum of African American History and Culture: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/>

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture:

<https://lewismuseum.org/>

Harriet Tubman Museum and Educational Center:

<https://www.harriettubmanorganization.com/>

The Banneker Douglas Museum: <https://bdmuseum.maryland.gov/>

(Kindness Grows Here is located in Maryland. So, we are most familiar with local museums.

There are many wonderful museums all over the Country!)



Another great way to gain a better understanding of the experience of Black people in the United States is to read books by African American authors. Check out this list that allows you to sort by age:

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/lists/coretta-scott-king-book-award-winners>

You can also, wear shirts that say, "Black Lives Matter," write this message in chalk on your sidewalk, or put a sign with this message in your window or on your car.

These actions may seem trivial. But they serve an important purpose: they help

normalize the “Black Lives Matter” message. There are many people who view this message and those who express it as extremist. By wearing shirts, writing messages in chalk, and putting signs in front of our homes or on our car, we show that this message is not extreme. It is human. It is about equal justice for all and the idea that all people should be treated equitably. Those are not extreme ideas. They are the ideas on which our nation was built, and now it is time that these ideals are realized for all people.



The more people who band together to make it clear that black lives matter, the louder and stronger our message will be.

And remember, Black Lives Matter. Black Lives have impact. Black Lives inspire. Black lives make the world a more beautiful place.



At Kindness Grows Here, we believe kindness means standing up against injustice and speaking out for what is right. We hope our videos help parents to start conversations that will help children develop their social conscience so that they too feel the need to fight for justice for all.

You can find additional resources from Kindness Grows Here on “Talking to Children About Race” here:

<https://kindnessgrowshere.com/2020/06/19/talking-to-children-about-race/>