

Transracial Parenting in Foster Care and Adoption

Strengthening Your Bicultural Family

This guidebook was created to help parents and children in transracial homes learn how to thrive in and celebrate their bicultural family; and for children to gain a strong sense of racial identity and cultural connections.



Iowa Foster & Adoptive Parents Association

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INTRODUCTION

*According to transracial adoption expert Joseph Crumbley, all foster children, whether in a transracial placement or not, worry **“Will I be accepted in this home, even if I am from a different (biological) family?”***

*Children in transracial homes also worry **“Will I be accepted even if I’m from a different race?”***

This booklet will help you understand the importance of race and culture for your family; and share helpful hints, parenting tips and resources for you on the culturally rich journey of transracial parenting. Building your child’s sense of racial identity, connecting your child to his or her culture and race, and preparing your child to deal with discrimination are important and often intimidating parenting tasks. It is okay to be uncomfortable. Knowledge is key to helping you navigate the path of transracial parenting effectively. Ask questions, seek information, and forge through the discomfort and anxiety. This is an exciting and eye-opening journey, full of ups and downs, full of laughter, and full of heart-warming experiences. Parenting a child of another race and creating a bicultural home environment will be the foundation for success in your family.

As a transracial parent, have you ever asked yourself the following questions?

- *Am I doing enough to help my black child feel a sense of belonging in our family?*
- *How can I better connect my Latino child to his culture, his racial roots?*
- *How can I prepare my daughter for the impending discrimination she will experience because she is black?*
- *How can I prepare my family to experience racism now that we are a transracial family?*
- *What do I need to do to meet my Korean child’s needs around race and culture?*
- *How can I advocate for multicultural educational materials in the schools?*

Or, have you ever been too embarrassed to ask questions about culture, afraid of saying the wrong thing or embarrassed about not knowing the answer?

To understand the “how-to’s” of parenting transracially, it is necessary to visit the past and understand the historical foundation of race and white privilege in society. Though racism today is not usually as overt as it was in decades past, it is still very present on a more subtle and institutionalized level. To best help your children develop a healthy racial identity, it is necessary to educate yourself about racism yesterday and racism today. For more information on any topic in this manual, we have included an extensive resource section in the back of this book.

A Transracially-Adopted Child's Bill of Rights

Adapted by Liza Steinberg Triggs from "A Bill of Rights for Mixed Folks," by Marilyn Dramé

- Every child is entitled to love and full membership in her family.
- Every child is entitled to have his culture embraced and valued.
- Every child is entitled to parents who know that this is a race conscious society.
- Every child is entitled to parents who know that she will experience life differently than they do.
- Every child is entitled to parents who are not looking to "save" him or to improve the world.
- Every child is entitled to parents who know that being in a family doesn't depend on "matching."
- Every child is entitled to parents who know that transracial adoption changes the family forever.
- Every child is entitled to be accepted by extended family members.
- Every child is entitled to parents who know that, if they are white, they benefit from racism.
- Every child is entitled to parents who know that they can't transmit the child's birth culture if it is not their own.
- Every child is entitled to have items at home that are made for and by people of his race.
- Every child is entitled to opportunities to make friends with people of her race or ethnicity.
- Every child is entitled to daily opportunities of positive experiences with his birth culture.
- Every child is entitled to build racial pride within her own home, school, and neighborhood.
- Every child is entitled to have many opportunities to connect with adults of the child's race.
- Every child is entitled to parents who accept, understand and empathize with her culture.
- Every child is entitled to learn survival, problem-solving, and coping skills in a context of racial pride.
- Every child is entitled to take pride in the development of a dual identity and a multicultural/multiracial perspective on life.
- **Every child is entitled to find his multiculturalism to be an asset and to conclude, "I've got the best of both worlds."**

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Transracial Parenting Pledge

As one committed to parenting cross-culturally, transracially, and or internationally,
I pledge the following:

- 1) To recognize the added value that diversity brings to my life, even outside of my children
- 2) To create a diverse home environment and family life that is reflective of our multicultural family
- 3) To prepare my child with survival skills to successfully navigate a race conscious society
- 4) To help my child to develop pride in his or her racial, ethnic identity and group membership
- 5) To confront racial, ethnic and cultural intolerance within my family, friends, and community
- 6) To seek and develop friendships that reflect my commitment to multiculturalism
- 7) To engage multicultural communities in order to learn, grow and share
- 8) To learn what matters to the racial/ethnic group of my child and why
- 9) To see ourselves as a multiracial family, a family of color and to embrace what that means in today's and tomorrows society
- 10) To move beyond the limits of my comfort, knowledge, and biases (to a place of cultural competence and responsiveness within my family and community through words and action)
- 11) To not ascribe to the notion of color blindness, but to color appreciation
- 12) To recognize that love is not enough, that it is necessary, but not sufficient in and of itself

Parent's Signature

Date

Parent's Signature

Date

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A TRANSRACIAL FAMILY?

How are transracial foster and adoptive families defined?

Transracial foster and adoptive families consist of children of one race or culture being raised by parents of a different race or culture. Transracial families are considered families of color.

How is “culture” defined?

Culture is defined in many different ways; however, most definitions contain the following elements: shared language, race, customs, beliefs, values, social status, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, and others. Given this broad definition, every person is a part of several different cultures. Interacting with people from a different culture than one’s own can create discomfort and anxiety. Interacting with people of one’s own culture brings comfort and a sense of belonging.

What do these definitions mean when it comes to parenting children of other cultures and races?

White parents of children of color have the responsibility to help their children define themselves as a member of their own genetic racial community. Whether of a single race or a mixed race, (biracial), children either feel “a part of” or “separate from.” Without connection to their own roots, a black child being raised in a white world will feel “separate from” the white people surrounding him who look different than him. He will also feel “separate from” the black people he looks like, who have the same cultural background, but he has no connection to. He needs connection to those that have shared culture and race. This is vital to his healthy development. No matter how he is raised, society will assign him to the race and culture of being black, and without connection, he will feel lost and isolated, not fitting in with the white culture he was raised in and not fitting in with his own racial culture. By connecting your children to their own race and culture, they will learn to grow in their roots while incorporating what they are learning from you about their identity in a transracial home.

They become bicultural, bridging the gap between the two worlds.

Knowing this, it is important to evaluate your own beliefs about other cultures and other races before parenting transracially. Every person has biases, and uncovering them is a lesson in self-awareness and an opportunity for personal growth.

Here are questions to ask yourself before deciding to parent transracially:

- *How many friends do you have of another race or culture?*
- *What types of things do you seek to know about other cultures?*
- *Do you attend multi-cultural events and celebrations?*
- *What do you know about specialized skin and hair care for children of color?*
- *Have you incorporated other races and cultures into your home life?*
- *Are the schools in your area diverse with children of many cultures?*
- *What cultures are represented in your church?*
- *How do your extended family members view people of different races?*

HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

The History of Transracial Foster Care and Adoption

In the mid 1950's, the Child Welfare League of America reported that African American children were the largest group of children in need of adoptive homes. Public and private agencies stepped up efforts to place these children by opting to include more kin, single female and foster parents in the pool of prospective adoptive parents. The next alternative for adoptive placement was to cross racial lines and transracially place children.

At the time, racial matching became one of many matching criteria that was considered to be good social work practice and in the best interest of the children. Children and families were matched on physical characteristics, including skin color, as well as social status and religious preference. While most of these other matching criteria were abandoned in the 1970's and 1980's in favor of matching criteria that focused on the ability of families to parent children with specific needs, racial matching was still an often used criteria of workers. The field was divided and the National Association of Black Social Workers voiced concern about children in transracial placements being at risk for racial identity issues and a disconnect from their cultural roots.

Because many black children lingered in care too long while waiting for a black foster or adoptive home, the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 was signed into law. MEPA prohibits denying or delaying placement of a child based on the race, color or national origin of the child or of the foster/ adoptive parent. MEPA was enacted to decrease the length of time that children waited to be placed in homes; to focus on recruitment and retention of foster parents who can meet the unique needs of children waiting to be placed; and to eliminate discrimination based on race, color or national origin. However, this version of MEPA contained a stipulation that racial and ethnic background could still be considered in making a placement. The Interethnic Adoption Provisions Act (also known as MEPA II) was then passed in 1996. This version amended the language of the original MEPA to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race in placement. Race was now to be excluded from placement guidelines. Under MEPA II, race may only enter into the placement decision when race issues are a matter of the best interest for the particular child in question.

Transracial Foster Care and Adoption Today

Currently there is a disproportionate number of African American children in foster care. In the general population, African American children represent 15% of all children. In foster care, African American children represent 32% of the 510,000 children. In addition to these findings, African American and Native American children have lower rates of adoption than other races (U.S. DHHS, 2008a; U.S. GAO, 2007).

In May 2008, the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute released findings on Families for African American Children: The Role of Race & Law in Adoption from Foster Care to address these disparities. The recommendations of this report are supported by the North American Council on Adoptable Children, the Child Welfare League of America, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, the Adoption Exchange Association, the National Association of Black Social Workers, Voice for Adoption, the Foster Care Alumni of America and the National Association for Social Workers.

This report details the results of 35 years of research on transracial adoption, concluding the following 3 key issues:

1. Transracial adoption in itself does not produce psychological or social maladjustment problems in children.
2. Transracially adopted children and their families face a range of challenges, and the manner in which parents handle them facilitates or hinders children's development.
3. Children in foster care come to adoption with many risk factors that pose challenges for healthy development. For these children, research points to the importance of adoptive placements with families who can address their individual issues and maximize their opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

Though there is limited research on the topic of transracially adopted children, recent findings reported by the Evan B. Donaldson Institute have detailed the following issues common to children in transracial homes:

1. Transracially adopted children face challenges in coping with being "different."
2. Transracially adopted children may struggle to develop a positive racial/ethnic identity.
3. A key life skill for transracially adopted children is the ability to cope with discrimination.

To summarize the conclusions of recommendations made by the Evan B. Donaldson Institute, it is recommended that children of color are placed with families who can meet their long-term needs, through supporting connection of the child to his or her own culture, fostering a healthy and positive racial identity, and preparing the child to deal with discrimination.

To read the entire report by the Evan B. Donaldson Institute, log onto:
www.adoptioninstitute.org/research/2008_05_mepa.php

What is "white privilege" and what does it mean in transracial foster care and adoption?

What is white privilege? It is being in the majority group in society, having power, and benefiting as a result. Think of a time when you were not in the majority group and you will quickly understand how difficult it is to be a minority in any group.

- Being the only female in a male group, or vice versa.
- Being the only overweight person in a group of non-overweight people.
- Being the only foster parent in a group of social workers.
- Being the only married person in a group of single people.

Peggy McIntosh, Associate Director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, said that white privilege is “like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, code books, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks.” McIntosh has written several articles on the issue along with the book “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” that address this cultural phenomenon.

Some of the items on McIntosh’s White Privilege Checklist include:

- “I can arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.”
- “I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.”
- “I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.”
- “I am never asked to speak for all of the people of my racial group.”
- “I can take a job or enroll in a college with an affirmative action policy without having my co-workers or peers assume I got it because of my race.”
- “I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children’s magazines featuring people of my race.”
- “I can walk into a classroom and know I will not be the only member of my race.”

These are only a few of the items on McIntosh’s White Privilege Checklist. These items are a stepping off point for discussion and for discovering more about how white privilege impacts all families, including transracial families.

White parents of minority children must educate themselves about white privilege to better understand their children’s experience in the world, to help their children navigate a world of being in the minority group, and to begin advocating on behalf of equality for their children.

When minority children are surrounded by people of their own culture, it is usually a needed “break” from being stared at for being different, from feeling like they don’t belong because of their race, from wondering who is and isn’t making assumptions about them for their race, from being watched by store security, and from being lumped together into one broad and inaccurate stereotype. Surrounded by people of their own culture, children will feel a sense of belonging and a freedom to be themselves not otherwise felt in the majority culture. This “break” is what children need on a regular basis.

To further understand how a person of a minority race feels in this society of white privilege, challenge yourself to go somewhere where you are in the minority race. Suddenly you are thinking about things that normally you might take for granted.

Imagine walking down the sidewalk as a white person in a predominantly black community. How do you think you would feel? Would you feel like you fit in? Would you be acutely aware of the fact that you are the only white person in the area....are you feeling alone? Would you know how to “fit in” if you lived here? Would you need to talk differently to fit in? Or dress differently? Would you be in danger of being attacked for not looking like most of the people here or for being different? Would you be treated the same way in the neighborhood stores, or cautiously watched because of your different-ness? Where would you feel like you fit in? What would you want to know if you were transplanted to this neighborhood to live long-term? And how would you find out?



GENERAL PARENTING TASKS FOR TRANSRACIAL PARENTS:

One of the most common things parents and professionals hear from transracial adoptees is that they want friends or brothers and sisters that look like them (eyes, skin color, etc.).

Children living in transracial homes need parents who recognize their need to know their cultural roots. Experts recommend that parents do the following things to meet the cultural needs of their children :

1. Interact with people of your child's race – form friendships with people of all cultures, valuing diversity.
2. Live in a diverse, integrated neighborhood.
3. Recognize multiculturalism is an asset and valued.
4. Seek out mentors within your child's culture - for yourself and for your child.
5. Choose integrated schools that offer unbiased educational materials.
6. Stand up to racism and discrimination. Have a no tolerance policy for it.
7. Provide the appropriate hair and skin care for your child.
8. Make your home a bicultural home.
9. Talk about race and culture often.
10. Go to places where your child is surrounded by people of his/her same race and culture.

The Culture of Children in Foster Care and Adoption

Trauma, Grief, and Attachment

Before looking at the above parenting tasks, it is important to recognize the culture of children in care that impacts their growth and well-being. Because children in foster and adoptive homes often have a background of abuse and neglect, along with separation from their parents, it is necessary to briefly outline how the many layers of trauma and grief impact a child's sense of identity, belonging and general well-being. When children experience trauma through abuse, neglect, and/or separation from birth parents, they must deal with trauma and grief. Your first task is to provide them with a safe environment to heal.

If there are attachment issues present, as there often are with children in foster and adoptive homes, it is important to seek out the professional help of an attachment-trained therapist. Without healthy attachment, the traumatized brains of these children will stay stuck in a flight or fight response, experiencing parental nurturing from you as pain and sometimes terror. Intimacy hurts for children with attachment issues. Specialized parenting techniques are necessary to help them heal.

Again, a trained therapist can assist in this process. In general, the earlier the intervention occurs on a developing brain, the better the results.

In addition to the issues of attachment, trauma, grief and loss, children in transracial homes experience an additional layer of struggle to find their racial identity in a home that doesn't represent their own race. Building a child's racial identity is an important task for parents in transracial homes.

Self-Esteem and Positive Racial Identity

Robert O'Connor, adult transracial adoptee, therapist and trainer has said, "if you are the only one, you are alone." If you are the only one who doesn't look like the others, you are alone. Feeling different from others can create low self-esteem, especially if a child views "different" as "bad".

What is Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem is a person's feeling of self-worth or a feeling of being of value - in their family, in their circle of friends, in the world.

High self-esteem creates a foundation to go out into the world with confidence and resiliency; with a willingness to take necessary risks and persevere through challenges. Self-esteem is built through repeated small successes, through a sense of belonging and feeling safe at home, and through being valued within the family and in broader society.

Low self-esteem robs a person of the courage to step out into the world with confidence. A child with low self-esteem might struggle with the ability to take necessary risks or form new relationships, or go after a dream. Low self-esteem also sets a child up to lack resilience to stress and can set him or her up to be vulnerable to others. This can play itself out in situations of peer pressure, or an inability to defend oneself against bullies or perpetrators, or many other possible scenarios. People with low self-esteem don't always have the ability to stay in touch with who they are on the inside, and instead they are susceptible to yield to what is around them – including unhealthy people or circumstances. Additionally, when a person suffers from low self-esteem, it can be very difficult to try new things, work toward goals, persevere through challenges, or learn new skills. They have an intense fear of failure, and a generalized belief that they ARE a failure as a person. The good news is that self-esteem can be taught.

How to Build Self-Esteem

Create a sense of safety for your child – physical and emotional safety. Children need a safe place to live, free of abuse, and a safe place to talk about their thoughts and feelings - ALL of their thoughts and feelings. This creates a sense of being valued, a belief that he or she has the right to exist, to think, and to feel; and the knowledge that he or she is important.

Create a sense of belonging. Children need to feel a sense of belonging in their families. Acknowledging similarities helps children feel like they belong. It is also important to acknowledge and celebrate differences as well. Let children's voices be heard and respected, so that they feel valued in the context of family.

Point out your child's strengths and abilities often. As they learn new skills in a certain subject (how to multiply or divide; how to solve complicated word problems; how to play a musical instrument; how to shoot a basketball...), acknowledge these small successes. Small successes provide the foundation for building self-esteem in children.

There are many resources for parents on how to build self-esteem in children. Check out your local library, book store, or Internet for resources on this topic.

What is racial identity? How can parents instill it?

"Positive racial identity depends on our ability to identify fully with our ethnic roots, yet remain confident that race or ethnicity does not limit our opportunities in life."

In addition to understanding what it means to be in foster care or to be adopted, children in transracial homes need to know what it means to be a member of their own minority group. Having positive experiences within their own cultures creates a strong racial identity and sense of belonging, along with a resiliency against negative stereotypes that are portrayed in the media and that are experienced in society through racism and discrimination.

Children in transracial homes will also need to learn what it means to be a member of a minority group while living in a family of the majority culture. These children have the additional challenge of learning how to live "bi-culturally," walking in two worlds; the world of their own culture and the world of the culture they are living in. Parents who make it a priority to become a bicultural home will help their children develop a strong sense of racial identity and self-esteem. There are many suggestions for helping children connect to their own cultures on pages 14-15, to provide a great foundation of success for your child.

A child's self-esteem and racial identity are strengthened when his or her cultural differences are valued. Examples of this would include providing for the unique skin and hair care of your child, along with their dietary and health care needs.

In general, it is important to celebrate similarities and differences. Sharing similarities creates bonding and a feeling of belonging.

"Your favorite food is spaghetti, just like mine."

"You like to learn about insects, just like your brother."

"You are good at math, just like your father."

Celebrating differences acknowledges that a child is valued because of their uniqueness and that having differences is positive.

"Yes, your skin is darker than mine. God makes people with all kinds of beautiful skin colors."

"Your hair only needs to be washed once each week; your sister's hair needs to be washed every day. You both have beautiful and different hair."

In general, children in transracial placements need to:

- Live in a home that provides positive experiences with the children's culture.
- Remain connected to same-race relationships, with peers and mentors.
- Live in a home that allows them to feel racial and ethnic pride; and provides the children with survival skills.
- Have parents who allow the children to explore their culture in many different ways; and who recognize the differences between the children's birth families' culture and their own family culture.
- Have parents who recognize and understand what the children will experience in a race-conscious society.
- Have parents who can care for the children's skin and hair care needs, along with dietary and medical needs.
- Have the right to feel a belonging to their current family culture as well as to their culture of origin.

Considerations for biracial children:

"People of mixed heritage do not have half the experience of being one race and half the experience of the other, any more than children of a mother and a father have half the experience of being their mother's child and half the experience of being their father's. They are the product of both, always, whether both are present or not," from Steinberg and Hall, 1998, "Is Transracial Adoption Easier for Multiracial Kids?" from www.pactadopt.org.

White parents may inadvertently believe their biracial child identifies more with their white culture, since the child is half-white and being raised by white parents. The truth is actually the opposite. Most biracial children identify themselves as children of color. Society places them in this category as well, since a person's appearance is what sets him or her apart from others. They can't choose to be one-half of who they are. It is important to explore all aspects of a child's racial roots so that they can form a strong sense of self and racial identity.

How to Connect Your Child to Their Culture; How to Become a Bicultural Family

The following are suggestions and not an exhaustive list. These are starting points and considerations for transracial families as they continue to grow on their journey of learning about culture.

Live in an integrated neighborhood. Choose a neighborhood where there are members of the child's culture or race and schools comprised of diverse cultures and ethnicities.

Socialize with members of your child's race or culture. The relationships you choose serve as a role model for your child. Building relationships with people of your child's culture may create natural mentor relationships for yourself and for your child. Allowing your child to connect to people of their own culture or ethnicity can minimize the loss they feel from being separated from it.

Talk openly about race and culture. This requires confronting your own discomfort, hidden biases and stereotypes you have collected over the years. There are many resources to do so listed in the back of this booklet.

Counter negative messages about a culture with positive ones. Point out that negative stereotypes are untrue and that, unfortunately, some people still believe them. Some people "just don't know" that what they're saying is wrong. Remind your child that every person is unique and everybody has strengths and weaknesses. Note your child's strengths often. Remember, two of the factors important to building self-esteem are a feeling of belonging and mastering small successes.

Balance your own discomfort with the belief that you ARE the right parent for this child. Making your child feel like he or she belongs in your family is important. Interracial families have a richness of diversity and experiences to celebrate.

Make your home a bicultural home. Incorporate the following areas of diverse cultures into your home life:

Art – Display art from various cultures.

Crafts – Create crafts/art from various cultures.

Cultural Life Book – Create a book about your child's country and culture.

Maps – Display maps or flags of your child's country.

Dolls – Collect multi-cultural dolls.

Vacation – Plan a vacation to your child's country.

Games – Play games from various cultures.

Music – Listen to music from different cultures.

Bedtime Stories – Consider buying "Cultural Bedtime Stories for Interracial Adoptive/Foster Families" (see the resources section for more on this book).

Literature – Visit libraries to learn more about your child's culture and other cultures.

Museums – Visit cultural museums.

Language – Learn a new language as a family.

Clothing – Purchase clothing of your child's culture.

Food – Make food that reflects your child's culture and various cultures as the norm in your home.

Friends – Develop friendships with people of diverse cultures.

Support groups – Join a group of others who have adopted transracially.

Animals – Learn about animals from your child's country.

Holidays – Celebrate holidays that are significant to his/her culture.

Incorporate Cultural Communities Whether you live in an integrated neighborhood or not, you can incorporate the following activities and visit the following places to help your family connect to its cultural roots:

- Schools - (Attend schools that are diverse in culture – also advocate for unbiased learning materials.
- Camps - (Attend camps/ cultural camps) - see the resources section in the back of this booklet
- Daycare - (Go to day care centers) that are diverse in culture.
- Churches - (Attend churches) that are integrated with diverse cultures.
- Sports - (Participate in athletic organizations) in neighborhoods of your child's culture.
- Social Organizations - (Participate in social organizations) where your child can connect to his or her culture.
- Cultural museums – Visit cultural museums and historical places specific to your child's culture and diverse cultures.
- Shops - Frequent beauty/barber shops, restaurants, and other places that are frequented by people of your child's heritage.
- Celebrations - Attend celebrations and events where most of the people present are of the same race or ethnic group as your child. This will not only help your child, it will help you understand what it feels like to be in the minority of a group.
- Take a trip to your child's country - If your child is from another country, consider a trip to that country to explore the culture and heritage. This could provide answers to your child about their history, along with providing an enriching and educating experience for everybody.
- History Classes - Take a history class on your child's culture.

In general, embrace diversity and celebrate all cultures in your home. Practice traditions from your child's ethnic heritage. This is imperative to becoming a bicultural home. Discussing cultural education should be a frequent topic of conversation at home. All members of the family should talk frequently about diversity and culture in the home.

As discussed earlier, celebrate the similarities and differences within your family. To feel a sense of belonging, similarities must be noted, such as a like for music, a love of animals, a desire to learn about science, and many others. Pointing out to your child how his or her likes and dislikes are the same as yours or your spouses will forge a strong sense of belonging; while celebrating differences.

As children adopted into transracial homes become adults, their voices are helping to guide important changes for families and professionals. The following articles are by Jae Ran Kim, MSW, LGSW, and John Raible, EdD. Ms. Kim is an adult transracial adoptee, social worker, writer and teacher. She has worked as a child specific recruiter for Hennepin County in Minnesota and serves as a community faculty instructor at Metropolitan State University. Dr. Raible is a biracial African American adult adoptee raised by white parents. He is the father of two grown African American sons adopted from foster care and the grandfather of biracial children. Dr. Raible works as an Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the College of Education & Human Sciences.

Being Anti-Racist Is a Journey, Not a Destination

By Jae Ran Kim, MSW, LGSW

***The following was article was published in the New Demographic e-book,
"How to Be An Anti-Racist Parent."***

I was thinking about what kinds of tips to suggest, and found myself struggling. I suppose I could suggest a bunch of books I found inspirational or poignant; maybe even come up with a "Top 10" list too – but being an anti-racist parent is truly a lot more challenging than any book or list can even begin to address. What I've learned comes down to just a few lessons, learned experientially in the past 13 years as a parent:

- You can't expect your children to behave better than you do. What you say is important, but it's your own actions that speak louder than words. In other words, you need to talk the talk and walk the walk. If you tell your children that they should accept "all kinds of people" yet they never see any diversity in your life, why would they believe your diversity talk? So much about race and racism intersects with other types of diversity, including class, culture, religion, gender and sexuality. Racism doesn't exist in a bubble and it isn't a problem to be "solved." Parents need to be able to address diversity in all its forms.
- You can't protect your children from racism. You need to be able to show them how ugly racism is, or they won't be able to recognize it for themselves. If your children are kids of color, they'll need to have survival skills – verbal, intellectual, and physical. And these survival skills aren't just about driving while Black or confronting skinheads – your kids will need to know how to survive the racism embedded in our educational, economic, judicial and occupational institutions.
- Children need to have the language to discuss race and racism. If you don't give them the chance to talk about it at home, they'll learn it from their classmates and from the media and much of it will be wrong information.
- Don't wait for your kids to come to you with questions about racism. In my home, discussions about race, racial representation and racism are as common as the latest episode of "American Idol." In fact, American Idol has been the starting point for some discussions! What my 8-year old contributes towards these discussions are very different than what my 13-year old contributes – but the main point is that they both contribute.
- You need to be able to recognize your own biases and privileges. Because we all have them.

To me, talking about race and racism is like talking to my kids about sex. You have to really work at it! You don't want to get too graphic when they are young so you need to figure out what is behind their questions. It will be a challenge as my kids get older and their questions become more abstract and harder to answer.

The Significance of Racial Identity in Transracially Adopted Young Adults

An Address by John Raible, 1990

Often after I speak to white parents about my experiences growing up in an interracial family, I come away feeling misunderstood. If only I could have said it differently, I think to myself. If only I could make them see what I see and feel what I feel. It is important to me that people understand why I identify so strongly with people of color. As an adoptee, I know that my childhood experiences may be quite different from what transracial adoptees experience today. Yet as a teacher with a degree in Multicultural Education, I firmly believe in the need for all people of color to develop a clear, affirming cultural identity in order to minimize the psychological effects of racism.

The main idea I want to leave with you today is the vital necessity for you to encourage the development of such an identity in your adopted sons and daughters of color. By using my life as an example, I hope to illustrate how a child in a predominantly white environment faces an enormous challenge. I hope to offer some insight into what needs to happen in families in order for their children to feel good about their cultural and racial heritage. I also hope my comments will be of some use to social workers and others involved with transracial adoptions, so that they might more effectively serve the children with whom they come in contact.

As a biracial child growing up in a virtually all-white setting, I set out on a search for a cultural and racial identity. I was looking for a social niche I could fit into, in which I could feel whole and affirmed. I needed such affirmation of who I was culturally because I wasn't taught a racial identity in a clear, straightforward, unambiguous manner. Yet all the while I was receiving very clear messages, from people in my surroundings and from the media, that I was different, unacceptable, and by extension, inferior.

Particularly stressful was my adolescence, the time when we all struggle for an identity separate from our parents. I found I had to struggle very hard to find role models and knowledge to help me answer the nagging question of "who am I?" It was painful because while I perceived racism all around me, I didn't have people around me to talk to who had experienced what I was experiencing, and who could therefore validate and share my perceptions.

You may ask, "Where were you perceiving racism?" I sensed it at school, in the Eurocentric curriculum that excluded a multicultural perspective. I sensed it among my peers. I felt it from the fathers of the white girls I was interested in. I sensed it from prospective employers when I was job hunting, and from security guards in shopping mall stores, and from police who watched me and sometimes stopped me on the streets. I detected it in the comments and jokes that went unchallenged among friends, and even among members of my family.

I often felt crazy, doubting my perceptions of racist situations, because I was told I was being "too sensitive" and "too serious." At some point I gave up trying to talk to my family about what I was going through, and resigned myself to expecting less in the way of support and understanding from them. I felt alienated from my family and friends, and totally alone as the only person of color I knew who was coping with a racist reality.

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It took years of pulling away from, and scrambling back to, my adoptive family before I could say with conviction and certainty, "I am black." It took years because I had to figure out for myself what being black meant. I had to unlearn false information and negative stereotypes I had absorbed from the racism in the environment we all grow up in. I had to gather my own strength and proceed to read and educate myself about the black experience, while my parents worried that I was rejecting them, which made me feel guilty and disloyal for seeking knowledge of my black heritage. My loyalties were divided. I was torn and confused by what I felt emotionally and what I had been taught intellectually. I felt hurt and belittled by the racism I was experiencing, yet simultaneously guilty, ungrateful, and maybe even wrong in my thinking. I felt isolated and misunderstood. My days were filled with anxiety, and anger.

Many of you are no doubt thinking, "Sounds like a typical adolescence to me!" But let me remind you, I'm just talking about my feelings about race at the moment. Of course I was also dealing with regular adolescent issues around dating, peer pressure, sexuality, gender roles, going to college, and growing up in general. The racial confusion made adolescence that much harder to cope with.

How did I manage to survive this emotional turmoil with my sanity intact? I believe several factors came together which enabled me to land on my feet. To begin with, my parents did love me-- that goes without saying. They offered their support, to the best of their ability. They effectively raised me to believe in myself, to fight injustice, and to stand up for my convictions. I will always be grateful for the love and guidance they have given me as my parents.

Beyond this, I began on my own to connect with significant members of the black community. For example, I started a correspondence with a black social worker whose name I learned from an article on transracial adoption in which we were both quoted. When I finally met her in person, I was immediately impressed with her warmth and her maternal concern. We had begun our correspondence with me questioning her about what I then saw as the "racism" of the National Association of Black Social Workers' position condemning transracial adoption. When I began to understand her point of view, part of me was relieved to realize that there was a group of people sincerely concerned about my welfare, and my pain, who were extending to me a welcome into the black community as one of their own. This was highly significant for me, to realize that black people did accept me and want me to be part of "their" community. I had grown up with the story that the social workers considered me "too light" to be adopted by a black family, and "too dark" for a white one. Which left me feeling like I didn't belong anywhere, except with a liberal, colorblind family that "rose above" racial designations.

Through my studies at college, I continued to grow in consciousness and understanding of the roots of racism, cultural imperialism, and white responsibility for racism. At the same time, I got the expected payoff from my decision to attend a public institution rather than a small, elite, "preppy" college. I had made this decision against the advice of my high school guidance counselor and friends, in the hope that I would gain exposure to a wider diversity of students at a state university, and apparently, it worked. I got to know other middle class black students as real people who were not that different from me. I began to appreciate the variety of ways of being black, recognizing in the black community the same variations, class distinctions, and lifestyle choices I was familiar with in white society. Yet all was not smooth sailing, by any means. I felt nervous and anxious around my new black friends and peers. I was self-conscious about sounding or acting "too white." I felt scrutinized for having white girlfriends, and continued to fret over being rejected and not being taken seriously as an equal.

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Naturally, when my parents would come to visit, I was self-conscious about being seen with them. I worried about being seen too often, or in the "wrong" places, with my white friends. I was very aware of feeling caught between two cultures, of having to tread the line between two worlds. Fortunately, in my multicultural education courses, I was learning new language to describe the experience of biculturality. More and more, I was identifying with black culture as an African American. I was lucky to meet other biracial individuals who were clear about their own identities as African Americans. And I also met black students who struck me as even more confused than me about their affiliations and allegiances. I finally came to understand that there isn't only one way of being black, that there was no mystique I had to measure up to. I came to believe that I could live however I wanted to live and still be accepted as a member of the black community. I enjoyed that feeling of belonging. I liked hearing my African American friends affirm me with teasing phrases like, "Man, you a nigga just like the rest of us."

While this was going on, my consciousness expanded to incorporate the related issues of oppression and resistance of Indians, Latinos, Asians, and women of all cultures. Then, when I went to teach in a Pueblo school in northern New Mexico for a semester, I had an amazing, revelatory experience. For the first time, I was aware of being in the majority; everyone had brown skin and dark hair like me! It was the first time I felt I could let my guard down and not have to anticipate the next racial insult or attack. I enjoyed the peace of not having to think about race all the time. As with my black friends at college, I was pleased with the warm reception given me by the Chicano and Indian people I met. I had never felt so automatically welcomed in any white community I'd lived in. I had the sense now that most people around me were kind, generous, and trustworthy, people whom I could count on if I needed help. This contrasted sharply with my experience of white people that only a few could be trusted and relied upon in that manner. I revelled in the camaraderie, the shared spirit of resistance to cultural domination, the pride we took in our respective heritages. I loved it all, and decided to stay on and teach in New Mexico for the next two years.

Again, I experienced the same warm, welcoming feelings and acceptance living in the Navajo Nation. While there, I also met white people who were more or less comfortable with their minority status, and who seemed less uptight and more down to earth than many of the people I'd grown up with. Finally, after teaching Navajo children for two years, I decided I was ready to move to a black community, and challenge myself to life and work in a so-called ghetto. I ended up getting a job teaching in Compton, near Watts, in Los Angeles. Once more, I was immediately accepted and made to feel welcome-- I don't know why I should have been surprised, at this point! I found that I was accorded a certain respect from my peers, for being well educated and for my commitment to teaching black and brown children in the public schools.

You can imagine the culture shock I experienced whenever I visited my family and friends from what felt like "my other life" back east. I do want to say, I will always love my adoptive family. And I also love, in a different way, my people. I have found that I need-- indeed, that I cannot live without-- the acceptance and friendship and inspiration of people of color. Truly, as Nikki Giovanni says, "Black love is black wealth." I choose to no longer be poor.

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I hope by now it is clear why I choose to identify so strongly with African Americans, in particular, and with people of color in general. It is a natural, logical and emotional identification, and one that I wish for all transracially adopted young people. I don't know if I have adequately conveyed the pain and frustration I lived through before arriving at a deeper sense of my cultural identity and a new consciousness. If I could, I would spare every child of color my feelings of isolation and despair. This is the reason behind my commitment to finding same-race homes for children of color, whenever possible. Please don't misunderstand-- it's not about hatred or segregation. Rather, it's about self-love and belonging, peoplehood and healing acceptance in the face of all-pervasive racism. It's about doing what needs to be done to eradicate racism, which is the subject of the next part of my talk.

I am grateful for what I have been given by being adopted. I received a great start to a life as an independent, self-sufficient black man. Now, living on my own, raising my own black son, no longer buffered by white middle class supports, I must make my way in a hostile, racist society drawing on all the resources at my disposal. For the most part, those resources are found in the black community and in other communities of color.

***For more articles and information from Dr. Raible, you can visit his website at:
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www.nysccc.org and then choose the link: Transracial & Transcultural Adoption & Foster Care Resources

40 Ways to Increase Bi-Culturalism in Transracial Families

Many transracial families can benefit from incorporating the adopted child's culture of origin into their homes. For transracial families, it is often a matter of bi-culturalism versus assimilation. Does the adopted child assimilate into the dominant culture of the home environment, or does the home environment and resulting attitudes and lifestyle represent both the parent's culture and the child's culture of origin? Years of experience, both personal and professional suggest the latter. To increase the bi-culturalism of the transracial family, the following list of 40 items will serve as a guide.

- 1) Choose a multicultural babysitter or respite provider
- 2) Choose a multicultural faith environment
- 3) Choose a multicultural physician
- 4) Choose a multicultural dentist
- 5) Choose to adopt a multicultural vacation location
- 6) Choose a multicultural grocery shopping environment that also has traditional cultural food
- 7) Choose multicultural daycare and schools
- 8) Choose a multicultural mentor for your child
- 9) Choose a multicultural mentor for the parent
- 10) Choose to live in a multicultural neighborhood
- 11) Choose a regular multicultural entertainment venue
- 12) Choose multicultural artwork i.e. pictures, statues (preferably from the child's culture of origin)
- 13) Choose multicultural reading material, books, magazines, and poetry, donate multicultural books to libraries and request libraries to purchase books or videos of color
- 14) Choose multicultural toys that reflect the child's race and ethnicity (dolls, superheroes, cartoon figures, lunch boxes etc.)
- 15) Choose multicultural restaurants as family favorites
- 16) Choose to cook multicultural foods as a usual menu item
- 17) Choose to highlight multicultural inventors, teachers, community members, or choose a favorite actor or actress of color and extol their virtues as the desired standard
- 18) Choose multicultural music and musicians as our family favorites i.e. Fred Hammond (gospel), Gloria Estephan (Latin sound)
- 19) Choose multicultural movies to own or rent i.e. Black Cinderella, The Wiz, Cosby Show etc.
- 20) Choose multicultural cartoons, TV shows
- 21) Choose to engage in multicultural guided activities and extol the virtues of people of color during the news, newspaper, TV or movie watching
- 22) Choose multicultural clothing and traditional dress
- 23) Choose to attend multicultural celebrations, community events, and celebrate multicultural holidays
- 24) Choose multicultural hair salon, barber and hairstyles
- 25) Choose to join multicultural professional associations, i.e. Latino Chamber of Commerce, Black Social Workers Association, book clubs
- 26) Choose multicultural community centers or health clubs to join or frequent
- 27) Choose multicultural camps, community ed., Awanas, cub scouts, girl scouts troops
- 28) Choose multicultural friends and families whose house you go to for dinner and hang out with (vacation together, camping, long-term close relationships)
- 29) Choose to create or join multicultural play groups, support groups or playgrounds
- 30) Choose multicultural people to join your family as *extended* or *honorary family* members to play the role of auntie, uncle, cousin or grandparents

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40 Ways to Increase Bi-Culturalism in Transracial Families

(continued)

- 31) Choose a multicultural place of employment that has people of color in leadership positions, and as co-workers
- 32) Choose multicultural issues or causes identified by a community of color to join, fight or advocate for
- 33) Choose multicultural agencies, events, and environments to volunteer for
- 34) Choose to learn a language, preferably the native, traditional language of the child
- 35) Choose a multicultural hobby or interest; learn the traditional artwork, dance or practices of the child's culture of origin.
- 36) Choose a multicultural class at a university, surf the net, read books, become a life long learner of multiculturalism
- 37) Choose multicultural holiday cards, stationery, commercial products, request these at stores
- 38) Choose to volunteer at your child's school to celebrate ethnic history months, i.e. volunteer to read multicultural books, tell stories, give multicultural posters
- 39) Choose to educate family members, friends, school and community about the value of multiculturalism
- 40) Choose to recognize the added value that living a bi-cultural life has for each family member

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Inviting Me to the Party

By Jae Ran Kim, MSW, LGSW

This past Friday was our school's annual Fall Picnic. Last spring I wrote about being snubbed from a "Mom's Night Out" event in which several moms from my kid's school organized an evening of socializing.

When I spoke to my co-worker, who had first informed me of this event, she was saddened and as upset as I was about how "Mary" passed over the moms of color when handing out invitations. She admitted she hadn't looked around to see how many moms of color were at this party, but related that she often thought about why more parents of color didn't participate in the PTO or on other school committees. We had a lengthy discussion about inclusiveness and how organizations can recruit and retain families of color.

The conversation about "inclusiveness" made me think more about how sometimes we people of color are used as pawns for "diversity." Just having an invitation alone isn't enough to entice me to participate or volunteer in a group or club or committee. Schools, churches, parent groups, social networking groups, writing groups – I've attended countless "groups" that ask me, as typically the lone or one of the lone people of color – what "they" can do to attract more people like "me."

So here are just a few suggestions:

- Don't just put up a flyer and expect me to come. If I know the group is not diverse, I need a personal invitation and a reason why my participation is requested.
- Take time to find out what my issues and concerns are. The only way to find that out is to ask.
- Don't ask your one token friend of color/community what the issues in their community are and take that as the gospel truth. One person does not a community make.
- If I volunteer an idea, suggestion, or my time, take me seriously.
- Don't expect me to be the spokesperson for my community.
- Investigate whether there are barriers or obstacles written into the foundation of your organization that prevent a more diverse membership.
- Don't expect us to do all the work socially. You need to step outside your comfort zone and build relationships with us. It's not always about us having to make relationships with you. That means, come on our turf once in a while.
- We can smell insincerity a mile away. If you're inviting us just so you can have some "numbers" to report, we won't stay.
- If you invite us and we don't come, don't just write us off. Take the time to find out why we didn't come. And if it really matters to you, you'll address those reasons.

Racism and Discrimination – Fostering Racial Coping Skills

For white parents who become transracial parents, it usually doesn't take very long to experience racial bias and discrimination as a family. You will experience the racism that minorities experience, and it may be unfamiliar, and sometimes unexpected, territory for your family. One Des Moines area foster parent commented on how surprised and angry she was to be followed around stores while shopping with her African American daughter. This happened on several occasions when they were out shopping together, an experience she had not had with her white children.

To help your child understand racism, prepare for it, and handle it, it is important to educate yourself about the history of racism. It is also necessary to understand the dynamics of white privilege as it has impacted your own life and what that means for the life of your children.

As discussed on pages 7-8, a good resource for understanding white privilege is the book "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" by Peggy McIntosh. According to McIntosh, when you benefit from white privilege, you don't have to think about it. You are in the majority. It can easily be taken for granted.

Although racism today is usually less aggressive and more subtle than in the past, it still exists. Here are some suggestions to help you and your family prepare for and handle discrimination.

Developing Racial Coping Skills:

One of the most important factors in preparing your child to deal with racism is to instill strong self-esteem in your child. When children have a positive view of themselves and their accomplishments, they can more easily move forward from hurtful outside comments of racism. They can compare racist comments to what they know about themselves and dismiss them as untrue more easily.

According to Dana Williams in the free and downloadable publication "Beyond the Golden Rule: A Parent's Guide to Preventing and Responding to Prejudice," there are helpful parenting tips to combat discrimination depending on the developmental age of children. The following is reprinted with permission from www.tolerance.org. Visit this site to download this free e-book or to access more publications for parents, children and educators.

5 TIPS: THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

BE HONEST: Don't encourage children not to "see" color or tell children we are all the same. Rather, discuss differences openly and highlight diversity by choosing picture books, toys, games and videos that feature diverse characters in positive, non-stereotypical roles.

EMBRACE CURIOSITY: Be careful not to ignore or discourage your youngster's questions about differences among people, even if the questions make you uncomfortable. Not being open to such questions sends the message that difference is negative.

BROADEN CHOICES: Be careful not to promote stereotypical gender roles, suggesting that there are certain games, sports or activities that only girls can do or only boys can do.

FOSTER PRIDE: Talk to your child about your family heritage to encourage self-knowledge and a positive self-concept.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE: Widen your circle of friends and acquaintances to include people from different backgrounds, cultures and experiences.

5 TIPS: THE ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN YEARS

MODEL IT: Talking to your child about the importance of embracing difference and treating others with respect is essential, but it's not enough. Your actions, both subtle and overt, are what she will emulate.

ACKNOWLEDGE DIFFERENCE: Rather than teaching children that we are all the same, acknowledge the many ways people are different, and emphasize some of the positive aspects of our differences – language diversity and various music and cooking styles, for example. Likewise, be honest about instances, historical and current, when people have been mistreated because of their differences. Encourage your child to talk about what makes him different, and discuss ways that may have helped or hurt him at times. After that, finding similarities becomes even more powerful, creating a sense of common ground.

CHALLENGE INTOLERANCE: If your child says or does something indicating bias or prejudice, don't meet the action with silence. Silence indicates acceptance, and a simple command – “Don't say that” – is not enough. First try to find the root of the action or comment: “What made you say that about Sam?” Then, explain why the action or comment was unacceptable.

SEIZE TEACHABLE MOMENTS: Look for everyday activities that can serve as spring-boards for discussion. School-age children respond better to lessons that involve real-life examples than to artificial or staged discussions about issues. For example, if you're watching TV together, talk about why certain groups often are portrayed in stereotypical roles.

EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE: Just as you should challenge your child's actions if they indicate bias or prejudice, it's important to praise him for behavior that shows respect and empathy for others. Catch your child treating people kindly, let her know you noticed, and discuss why it's a desirable behavior.

5 TIPS: THE TEEN YEARS

KEEP TALKING: Many believe the last thing teens are interested in is having a conversation with parents. But even if your teen doesn't initiate conversations about issues of difference, find ways to bring those topics up with them. Use current issues from the news, such as the immigration debate or same-sex marriage, as a springboard for discussion. Ask your teen what she thinks about the issues.

STAY INVOLVED: Messages about differences exist all around your teen: the Internet, songs, music videos, reality shows, ads and commercials, social cliques at school. Know the websites your teen enjoys visiting; take time to listen to or watch the music and shows they enjoy. Then discuss the messages they send. Ask your teen about the group or groups she most identifies with at school. Discuss the labels or stereotypes that are associated with such groups.

LIVE CONGRUENTLY: Discussing the importance of valuing difference is essential, but modeling this message is even more vital. Evaluate your own circle of friends or the beliefs you hold about certain groups of people. Do your actions match the values you discuss with your teen? Teens are more likely to be influenced by what you do than what you say, so it's important for your words and behaviors to be congruent.

BROADEN OPPORTUNITIES: It may be natural for teens to stick to groups they feel most comfortable with during the school day. These often are the people they identify as being most like themselves. Provide other opportunities for your teen to interact with peers from different backgrounds. Suggest volunteer, extracurricular, worship and work opportunities that will broaden your teen's social circle.

ENCOURAGE ACTIVISM: Promote ways for your teen to get involved in causes he cares about. No place for him to hang out with friends? Encourage him to get together with peers to lobby city officials for a teen social center or skate park. Upset about discriminatory treatment of teenagers by a storekeeper or business? Give your teen suggestions for writing a letter of complaint or planning a boycott. When young people know they have a voice in their community, they are empowered to help resolve issues of injustice.

HOW TO HANDLE DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

Confront racism when it happens to your children; have a no tolerance policy for racism. Though you shouldn't fight their battles for them, you can help them know what to do when it happens to them. Let them know you are there for them to talk to when an incident happens. Acknowledge that you understand how hurt they are and that what happened to them was unfair. Let them know the remarks about them (or any other children of color or culture) are untrue and wrong. You can let your child know you will go to battle for them when they need you to. ***If the racism comes from another adult, it is imperative that you step in and address it.***

If discrimination happens, there are several things you can do as a parent.

- Talk to your child and validate that bad things like this do happen and they do hurt. Recognize their pain.
- Tell your child he or she doesn't deserve to be treated that way, noting how good of a person he or she is.
- Tell your child that nobody has the right to say these things, and that the person being hurtful doesn't really know the child.
- If it is an adult discriminating against your child, you will need to step in and address this for the child.
- If it is another child discriminating against your child, give your child phrases to say in these circumstances.

Avoid saying things like "He didn't mean that," or "You're being too sensitive." These statements are harmful and will create feelings of shame and invalidation, causing your child to feel confused and devalued. These answers will also create a mistrust in your relationship with your child, and he or she will most likely not seek you out to help in these situations in the future. Feelings of isolation and low self-esteem might follow.

There are many helpful resources on this topic available. See the last section of this booklet for more resources.

Teaching your child to respond to racism:

First of all, do not expect to have all of the answers. Because each situation is unique and every individual is unique, there is no standard way to teach your child to respond to racism. You can model for them how to respond to individual situations and this will teach them when to stand up against it and when to ignore it. Family members, peers, and neighbors are a different story, as these are frequent contacts of your child. Lean on your friends and mentors of color to help you address the situations as a parent and to offer advice to your child. You can also arm yourself with knowledge through resources listed in the back of this booklet.

It is important as a parent to gauge your child's reactions and feelings around the incidences. Intervene when harassment is more than a one-time thing with another peer. Go to the school and get teachers or administrators involved, or address the parents of the child involved. If an adult is targeting your child, you need to address it directly with that person.

Protecting your child's boundaries:

Some people will respond to racial differences with discomfort. They might comment on how beautiful the child is, while not commenting on other birth children. Or they might start touching the child's hair because it is different than their hair. It is important to intervene when this happens.

You might consider saying:

- "Thank you I think that all children are beautiful."
- "Please do not touch my child's hair."
- "It makes me uncomfortable when people touch her hair."

How to handle family members who don't support your child's racial identity:

Family relations can be a tricky area; however, it is important that you have a no tolerance policy toward racism. Whether a person is aiming remarks at your child, at another culture or race, or gender, or other area, confront this. There are many ways to stand up to a person in such a situation. It is okay to say "Your remark is offensive. Please do not say such a thing again." Or "I know you wouldn't have said such an offensive statement deliberately; you must mean something else..." (This gives the person a chance to change what he or she has said). Allowing the person this opportunity to change their stance allows for their own growth. It can be a positive start toward change. Offering facts to counter such statements can also be helpful.

Most importantly, spend time with family and friends who are supportive of your transracial family.

ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS:

Some questions your child will be faced with center around being in foster care or having been adopted. Others may center around issues of race and culture. Below are some common questions with some potential answers to equip your child with, strengthening their sense of racial identity and self-esteem. In general, you should teach your child that he or she doesn't have to answer any of these questions if he or she isn't comfortable doing so. Their life story is for them to decide when to share, how much to share and with whom to share it. You can guide this conversation and prepare them for questions, allowing them to choose what to say.

More on boundaries:

Preparing your child to answer questions can help them form boundaries. If they have a history of abuse, boundaries are a confusing concept, and children in care can believe that they are "everybody's property" and without boundaries. The answers below can help children learn that their life story is private, as is their body; and they have the power to choose with whom to share their private story. This can also serve as a jumping off point to discuss the difference between privacy and secrecy in regard to their life story. Privacy is about respect for yourself and your story, where secrecy is about guilt and shame. Using the word "surprise" can replace "secret" in regards to Christmas presents or birthday presents.

When Children Are Asked Difficult Questions From Others:

“Where’s your REAL mom?”

- “That’s personal and I don’t share that.”
- “My parents love me very much.”

“Why don’t you look like your mother...or sister/brother?”

- “Everybody’s unique, aren’t they?”
- “Because not all families look alike.”

“Why were you adopted? Didn’t your mom want you?”

- “I am wanted by my family.”
- “I am wanted and loved by more than one family.”
- “My parents adopted me because they love me.”

“Why are you in foster care?”

- If your child is comfortable answering this, he or she might say “I need to live where it’s safe right now.” They may also opt to walk away or say they don’t feel comfortable answering that question.

“What does it feel like to be adopted?”

- “What does it feel like not to be adopted?”
- With close friends, and depending on your child’s age, they may choose to be more open with their answer to this question.

“Do you miss your birth parents?”

- “I don’t want to talk about that....So, have you read the book ...?”
- “Yes, I miss them and I don’t want to talk about it right now.”

“Why do you have a new last name?”

- “Because I have a new last name since I was adopted.”
- “Sometimes people change their names.”

When Parents Are Asked Difficult Questions From Others:

Remember, you are role modeling responses for your child. If you respond out of anger your child may think this topic is shameful to talk about; therefore being a transracial adoptee is something to be embarrassed and ashamed of.

“Where did you get her?”

- If you have more than one child, consider answering to include all of your children, such as “She is from Korea; Anthony is from Des Moines; and...”
- It’s always okay to say “This isn’t the place to discuss that” or “That’s personal” and change the subject or walk away.

“She is so lucky to have been adopted by you.”

- “We are the lucky ones to have her in our lives. We love her so much.”

“Do you have any children of your own?”

- “Just these four.” (referring to your birth and adoptive children).

“Are they REAL brother and sister?”

- “We’re really their parents and they are really brother and sister.”
- “We’re a real family...no imaginary family members here.”

“How could his parents have abandoned such a sweet little boy?”

- “It was very difficult for his birthmother, but she couldn’t take care of ANY babies so she chose to find a loving family for her baby.”

“What do you know about her real parents?”

- “We’re his real parents, since we are raising her.”
- “I’m not comfortable sharing such personal information.”

SKIN CARE & HAIR CARE

There are special cultural considerations in the areas of skin care, hair care and medical needs. This section will highlight some of these areas and provide resources for parents.

Hair Care for African American Children:

Caring for the hair of African American children is very different than caring for a Caucasian child's hair. Children feel better about themselves when they present themselves to the world in a well-groomed manner. Children notice each other's hair and it can be a source of pride. They deserve to feel beautiful and handsome to contribute to their sense of self and self-pride.

Though each child is unique, here is a general guide for caring for African American children:

- **Washing hair:** Water dries out the hair of African American children. Therefore, washing their hair once every week is sufficient, and in some cases this is even too often.
- **Moisturizing hair:** Special oils should be applied to the hair to help the hair maintain moisture.
- **Combing and brushing:** Though children may dislike this, their hair should be combed or brushed daily. This will help prevent matting. Consider using natural-bristle brushes rather than synthetic brushes which are harder.
- **Relaxers; Pressing and Straightening Hair:** Avoid using relaxers, which are chemicals that straighten the hair, unless done by a professional.
- **Products to use:** Special products for African American hair should be used for your child of color, as they tend to be re-moisturizing. Creams and oils can be applied daily to help hair stay healthy. Your child's hair should look shiny but not greasy.
- **Professional salons:** Consider taking your child to a professional salon that specializes in serving African Americans. You can learn how to do your child's hair, receive helpful tips, and access to hair products. Your child finds a natural connection to his or her culture and experiences being in the majority versus the minority. This can serve as an important cultural connection, where friendships and mentors are established. Your child will also receive the message that you care about their cultural identity and you value them as a member of their race.

HAIR CARE PRODUCTS:

Some hair care products that can be tried are: oils, lotions, conditioners, shampoos, and styling gels. Products like these need not cost a lot of money, and The Dollar Store will do for some things. Remember, hair care is not an exact science.

- **Oils:** Blue Magic; Bergamont, Softee Hair food, Du gro, Oil Sheen, Sulfur 8. African pride, Coconut oil.
- **Lotions:** Baby Oil and Lotions, Suave, Guarantee Dry Skin Lotion, Vitamin E Skin Cream. Fruit of the Earth E Skin Cream. Silk Elements Skin Cream.
- **Conditioners:** Lustrasilk Cholesterol, Parnevu Leave-in Conditioner, Queen Helene Placenta Cream Hair Conditioner. Manes & Hair, Crème of Nature, Motions.
- **Shampoos:** Motions, Crème of Nature Therapeutic T+Plus, Manes & Hair, Suave, Sulfur 8, Scurl, Silk Elements, Stay Soft, Du Gro.
- **Styling Gel:** Try to stay away from products with a high alcohol content. Strictly use African products for African hair.

SKIN CARE

by Dorothy Fouse, ADN, foster and adoptive parent, and IFAPA trainer.

People with darker skin pigmentation in their skin, are often more dry and the oils must be replaced daily.

- When oiling the skin, determine if the skin will need a heavy oil or a light oil. Remember when taking care of your skin, pores can become blocked, which sometimes leads to infection.
- Some oils that are commonly used among people of color are lotions with vitamin E that moisturize, Vaseline, Baby Oil, and Mineral Oil.



The skin must be assessed for break down as well as moisturizing needs.

- When people of color have dry skin, it tends to crack and bleed.
- Skin will appear ashy or powdery when needing to be moisturized.
- The hands, feet and areas of bony prominence may need extra attention.

In the summer, as well as in the winter, sunscreen needs to be applied to the skin.

- People of color burn just like anyone else. When going out in the summer or winter, apply sunscreen.
- People of color burn easily in the winter as well. Because of the dark skin, the sunlight from the snow reflects off of the snow to the dark skin and causes the skin to burn.
- Make sure when you are walking little ones that they too have a fair amount of sunscreen.

Nail beds and the pads of your hands and feet can serve as great indicators if a person of color is in trouble being oxygenated.

- Often times Europeans' skin turns blue or pale when they are in need of medical care.
- When people are cyanotic you can check under their tongue and their eyes to see if they are in trouble. But sometimes the mouth is as dark as the skin so it is hard to do that. Instead, look at the shaded areas, like the chest or the neck or legs to be an indicator. Those shaded places may shed some light on the problem.

Skin must be washed daily—while hair is washed often only once per week.

- Sometimes people get this information mixed up or turned around. But we, too, must be washed daily.

Scarring may occur more pronounced for people of color.

- Often times the darker the skin, the more prone you are to scarring.
- When large amounts of skin form, this is known as scarring.

Dorothy Fouse, foster parent, IFAPA trainer, and nurse, has a passion for training foster and adoptive parents on the care of children of color. She welcomes phone calls from parents on hair care, skin care, and cultural heritage. Ms. Fouse can be reached at: 563-388-0359 or 563-505-9845. Ms. Fouse offers trainings on these topics through IFAPA. Check out www.ifapa.org to find her next trainings!

SKIN CONDITIONS and CHILDREN OF COLOR

Below is a list of some of the skin conditions specific to children of color. Being aware of these conditions can help you identify them if they present themselves in your children.

Acne Keloidalis

Raised pimple-like circles, usually at the nape of the neck.

Café-Au-Lait-Spot

Flat, light tan birth marks with distinct edges. If there are several of these spots and they are larger than a quarter, it may indicate a genetic disorder called neurofibromatosis.

Coining

Small red circles or zebra-looking red stripes on an Asian child's body, sometimes forming a symmetric, linear pattern. Sometimes these resemble cigarette burns. Coining is a common healing practice in the Asian community, but can result in burns and allegations of abuse.

Dermatosis Papulosa Nigra

Dark, small, smooth bumps most commonly found on African Americans. These usually appear on the face and neck.

Infantile Ocropustulosis

Puss-filled bumps usually on the palms, soles of feet, fingers, and toes of African American infants (2-10 months).

Keloids

Mass of shiny and raised scar tissue. It usually grows beyond the boundary of the injury that caused the scar. African Americans and Hispanics are 16% more likely to develop keloids.

Mongolian Spots

Often mistaken for bruises, Mongolian Spots are flat birthmarks with usually indistinct edges. They are most common on the lower back and buttocks, but can be found on a child's legs, back, sides and shoulders. These are very common in Native Americans, African Americans, Asians and Hispanics.

Nevus of Ota and Nevus of Ito

These bluish lesions usually appear near the eye area of the face, but can also appear on the face, shoulders, neck and upper arms. They are more common in African American and Asian females.

Pityriasis Alba

Scaly bumps of lighter pigmentation. These usually occur in patches around the cheeks, forehead, neck and shoulders. These can occur in all races.

Vitilego

Patchy loss of color in the skin. Sometimes these patches are smooth, milk-white spots on various parts of the body.

GENERAL TRANSRACIAL RESOURCES:

Robert O'Connor, MSW, LGSW, teacher, trainer, therapist and consultant

<http://www.transracialadoptiontraining.com/>

Phone: 612-702-4809 / E-mail: robert_oconnor@msn.com

Address: 400 Mary Lane South Maplewood, MN 55119

Jae Ran Kim, MSW, LGSW, social worker, writer and teacher

Jae Ran blogs at the following websites:

<http://www.antiracistparent.com/author/jae-ran/>

<http://harlowmonkey.typepad.com/>

Dorothy "Dottie" Fouse, ADN, foster/adoptive parent, trainer

Dottie welcomes questions from parents on culture, skin and hair care

1-563-388-0359

Richard and Linda Harrell, IFAPA Cultural Liaisons

Call: 866-537-8189 or 515-285-0315

E-mail: richlynnifapa@live.com

Richard and Linda welcome your questions about transracial parenting.

ONLINE HELP is only a click away....

Ask the Experts! Michelle Johnson, MSW, and John Raible, EdD are both adult transracial adoptees and professionals in the field. You can e-mail questions about transracial or transcultural adoption or foster care, and one of the experts will give you an answer. All questions and answers are posted on the website, anonymously. www.nysccc.org/T-Rarts/askme.html

Websites to Find Transracial Books:

For an extensive list of multicultural books, go to:

Pact, An Adoption Alliance: www.pacgtadopt.org

Perspectives Press: www.perspectivespress.com

Tapestry Books: www.tapestrybooks.com

Free E-Books:

Beyond the Golden Rule: A Parent's Guide to Preventing and Responding to Prejudice -free, downloadable at: <http://www.tolerance.org/parents/index.jsp>

How to Be an Anti-Racist Parent: Real-Life Parents Share Real-Life Tips (free e-book by by Carmen Van Kerckhove at the following website:

<http://www.antiracistparent.com/2007/06/20/free-e-book-how-to-be-an-anti-racist-parent/>

Responding to Hate At School: A Guide for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators published by Teaching Tolerance – free e-book at www.teachingtolerance.org

Speak Up! Responding to Everyday Bigotry (free e-book) at <http://www.tolerance.org/speakup/>

Transracial Books:

40 Ways to Raise A Nonracist Child by Barbara Mathias & Mary Ann French

101 Ways to Combat Prejudice by Barnes and Noble and the Anti-Defamation League
This can be found at: www.adl.org/prejudice

Are Those Kids Yours? American Families with Children Adopted From Other Countries by Cheri Register

Beyond Good Intentions: by Cheri Register

Black Baby White Hands: A View From the Crib by Jaiya John

Black Children White Parents: Putting the Pieces Together by Tonya Moore

Cultural Bedtime Stories:

Cultural Bedtime Stories for Interracial Adoptive/Foster Families
<http://adoption.about.com/od/parenting/a/bedtimestories.htm>

Christmas Crafts from Around the World by Judy Ann Sadler

Daughter of the Ganges by Asha Miro

Dim Sum, Bagels and Grits: A Sourcebook for Multicultural Families by Myra Alperson

Different and Wonderful: Raising Black Children in a Race-Conscious Society by Darlene & Derek Hopson

Does Anybody Else Look Like Me?; A Parent's Guide to Raising Multiracial Children by Donna Jackson Nakazawa

Fade: My Journeys in Multiracial America By Elliott Lewis

Happy to Be Nappy by Bell Hooks

Hate Hurts: How Children Learn and Unlearn Prejudice by Caryl Stern-LaRosa and Ellen Hofhaimer Bettman

I'm Chocolate, You're Vanilla: Raising Healthy Black and Biracial Children in a Race-Conscious World by Marguerite Wright

In Their Own Voices by Rita Simon & Rhonda Roorda

In Their Parents' Voices: Reflections on Raising Transracial Adoptees by Rita Simon & Rhonda

Roorda

Transracial Books:

Inside Transracial Adoption by Gail Steinberg and Beth Hall.

It's All Good Hair: The Guide to Styling and Grooming Black Children's Hair by Michele Collinson

Kids Talk Hair by Pamela Ferrell

Kinki Kreations by Jenna Renee Williams and Maida Cassandra Odom

Mixed: My Life in Black & White by Angela Nissel

Mixed: An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience by Chandra Prasad

No Lye: The African American Women's Guide to Natural Hair Care by Tulani Kinard

Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption by Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin.

Preventing Youth Hate Crime: A Manual for Schools and Communities

(free pamphlet) by the US Department of Education: www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS

Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender and Kinship (Nation of Newcomers)

by Sara Dorow.

Transracial Adoption and Foster Care by Joseph Crumbley

Transracial Adoptions: An Adoptive Mother's Documentary of Racism, Injustice by Joann Lang

Wavy, Curly, Kinky: The African American Child's Hair Care Guide by Deborah Lilly

We're Different, We're the Same (Picturebook) by Bobbi Kates

Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? By Beverly Daniel Tatum

Ya Tibya Lublu: Recipes of Love for Orphans of Eastern Europe

<http://www.arkangels.org/?q=node/3> (home site: www.arkangels.org)

Yellow: Race in America beyond Black and White by Frank Wu

The Professor's Daughter: A Black & White Family by Emily Raboteau

Soul-To-Soul: A Black Russian Jewish Woman's Search for Her Roots By Yelena Khanga.

A Wealth of Family: An Adopted Son's International Quest for Heritage, Reunion, and Enrichment (Family Success) by Thomas Brooks

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Peggy McIntosh

Videos:

Visible Differences: A DVD looking at transracial adoption with clarity and compassion. Can be purchased at www.pactadopt.org.

Struggle for Identity: Issues in Transracial Adoption

Order at www.photosynthesisproductions.com/store.cfm

This award-winning video is a starkly realistic account of the transracial adoption experience. Narrated by young adults who were adopted as children, this documentary examines the effects of transracial adoption on individuals, families, and society.

Struggle for Identity: Issues in Transracial Adoption – A Conversation 10 Years Later

Order at www.photosynthesisproductions.com/store.cfm

Conversation 10 Years Later is a captivating follow-up to the original video. John and Michelle, two members of the original cast, return to reflect on their experiences a decade after the first film. With candor and passion, they discuss their lifelong journeys as transracial adoptees. The two explore issues of racism, the visible and public nature of transracial adoption, loyalty and attachment, transracialization and creating multicultural families, as seen through the lens of their personal experience and professional training.

Outside Looking In: Transracial Adoption in America.

Narrated by an African American man who was adopted by a white family as a child, this film examines the importance of nurturing racial identity in transracially adopted children. To purchase this video, go to: itvs@itvs.org

Thunderhead: A Children's Hair Care Video for Parents by Pamela Farrell (available at www.pactadopt.org)

Toys and Dolls:

Real Kidz is a website where bi-racial dolls can be purchased and resources found: www.molloytoy.com/

Dolls Like Me is a website of multicultural toys and dolls. Visit: www.dollslikeme.com/

Organizations & Internet Resources:

Multicultural Education Through Miniatures

www.coedu.usf.edu/Culture/index.htm

Multicultural Education through Miniatures includes photos, maps, stories, and games of handmade dolls and puppets from many different countries around the world. A great resource to increase global awareness and learn about other cultures.

Organizations & Internet Resources:

Alaafia Kids Company

Alaafia Kids is a website with dolls, books, music, crafts, resources, newsletters, clothes and toys with multicultural themes. The website address is: www.alaafiakids.com.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL)

The ADL is dedicated to combating hate crime and promoting intergroup cooperation and understanding.

823 United Nations Plaza - New York, NY 10017

212-885-7800 - www.adl.org

The Association of Multiethnic Americans (AMEA)

This nationwide organization of local multiracial / multiethnic groups is incorporated as a nonprofit public benefit organization. AMEA promotes a positive awareness of multiculturalism through advocacy, education and collaboration on behalf of the multiethnic, multiracial and transracial adoption community. For more information, go to www.ameasite.org

Biracial Family Network, BFN

The Biracial Family Network (BFN) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation organized to help eliminate prejudice and discrimination by assisting individuals and families of diverse ethnic ancestry to improve the quality of their intercultural relationships via education and social activities. For access to newsletters, support and resources for transracial families, visit: www.bfnchicago.org

A Birth Project

Academic research, creative expression and general examination and support of transracial/international adoptee life and experience. <http://birthproject.wordpress.com/>

Bridge Communications, Inc.

This is an organization dedicated to educating and sharing information with individuals and families who are living the multicultural/multiracial experience. Through classes, both virtual and on-site, participants learn hands-on strategies for building strong self-esteem and a positive racial identity in themselves and their children. In addition, Bridge leads panel and discussion groups for multi-racial adults and children. Our trainers facilitate diversity training seminars for school students and staff, social service agencies and community organizations. <http://www.bridgecommunications.org>

Center for the Study of Biracial Children – CSBC

The CSBC offers advocacy, training, educational resources and workshops committed to multiethnic issues. A resource for researching and exploring the complexities of biracial and multiethnic children. <http://csbchome.org>

Evan B. Donaldson Institute is a national not-for-profit organization devoted to improving adoption policy and practice. www.adoptioninstitute.org

Family Diversity Projects

Family Diversity Projects has created award-winning travel rental exhibits, including “Of Many Colors: Portraits of Multiracial Families” & “In Our Family: Portraits of All Kinds of Families,” that tour communities nationwide and internationally. Educating people of all ages to recognize, support, and celebrate the full range of diversity; exhibits are designed to help reduce prejudice, stereotyping, and harassment of all people who are perceived to be “different” from the “norm.” Family Diversity Projects also provides speakers on diversity and workshop leaders for conference and exhibit venues. <http://www.familydiv.org>

iCelebrateDiversity.com

This site offers articles, resources, gifts, and education for multicultural families. iCelebrateDiversity.com also has an extensive resource area listing many local, regional and national organizations, as well as, online resources for the multicultural family or kindred spirit! The website address is: www.iCelebrateDiversity.com.

Interracial Family Pride

iPride’s mission is to cultivate positive identity formation in children who are of more than one racial or ethnic heritage and/or who have been transracially adopted. IPride strives to create a more inclusive and equitable society by educating ourselves, our children, and our communities, about multiethnic families, mixed heritage identity and transracial adoptee experiences. www.ipride.org

Interracial Voice

Interracial Voice (IV) is an independent, information-oriented, networking news journal, serving the mixed-race/interracial community in cyberspace. Their website address is: www.interracialvoice.com

Many Shades of You at www.manyshadesofyou.com/index.html

This sites compiles lists of books, toys, gifts, and resources that reflect your entire circle of family and friends.

Maria P.P. Root

Practicing clinical psychologist focusing her efforts and skills on the multiethnic experience. Dr. Root provides resources and a scientific view of the complex issues of multiracial people. She is based in Seattle, Washington. Her website is: www.drmariaroot.com

MAVIN

The meaning of the word is “one who understands.” This Seattle based non-profit exists for the benefit of the mixed race community. News, organizing meetings, a print magazine and an extensive program schedule for every level of the multiethnic population. <http://www.mavin.net/>

Mixed Heritage Center

The mixed Heritage Center (MHC) is a clearinghouse of information relevant to the lives of people who are multiracial, multiethnic, transracially adopted or otherwise affected by the intersection of race and culture. <http://www.mixedheritagecenter.org/>

Mixed Messages Productions

Mixed Messages Productions is a production company designed to bring together, encourage,

highlight, & showcase the work of artists in the Mixed Race Arts Program. www.mxdmessages.com

The Multiethnic Education Program

The ME Program provides educators and families culturally competent resources and strategies to ensure mixed heritage children thrive in our increasingly diverse society. See more about trainings and publications for the early childhood and school age communities at:

www.multiethniceducation.org

MultiRacial.com

Essays, forums, blogs and commentaries covering all aspects of the multiracial population. This is an information filled website for the perusal of the casual learner or deep intentioned interaction with a live cyber-based community. <http://www.multiracial.com/>

MultiRacial Sky at www.multiracialsky.com

The Multiracial Family Center

Offers an educational program through which multiracial and transracial families can come together to help children learn positive racial identity and cultural competence.

www.multiracialfamilycenter.org

National Association for Multicultural Education, NAME

NAME's main objective is to give educators of preschoolers to upper level students support and knowledge for teaching their multiethnic pupils. Founded by a university professor, information available to any member includes lesson plans and a teaching video. www.nameorg.org

Rainbow Kids: The Voice for Adoption: www.rainbowkids.com

The Internet's central location for Adoption Information, International Adoptions, Special Needs Adoption, Adoption Articles and Waiting Child Photolistings.

Swirl

Community building, education, and action. Swirl serves the whole nation through mixed-race community chapters with events for individuals and families. Chapter activities include: Monthly dine-outs, book clubs, film screenings, discussions, panels, museum outings, family events, volunteer activities, and advocacy opportunities. www.swirlinc.org

Tolerance.org

Online destination for people interested in dismantling bigotry and valuing diversity within oneself, at home, at school, at work or within the community. Site offers daily new, guidebooks for all ages, resources, downloadable public service announcements and games for young children.

www.tolerance.org

CULTURAL CAMPS:

Camp Kupugani - "Kupugani" is a Zulu concept meaning "to raise oneself up." This multicultural residential summer camp focuses on diversity and communications skills in a fun atmosphere.

www.campkupugani.com - 6903 W. White Eagle Rd., Leaf River, IL 61047 - 866-471-4616

CULTURAL CAMPS:

Destiny Art Center - Exists to end isolation, prejudice and violence in the lives of youth. Providers of dance, martial arts, conflict resolution, self-defense, and youth leadership classes and workshops.

Address: 1000 42nd Street - Oakland, CA 94608

Phone (510)597-1619 - E-mail info@destinyarts.org - Website: www.destinyarts.org/

Hands Around the World - An adoption support group whose focus is on culture for families who have been touched by cross-cultural adoption. Summer camps to explore birthland ethnic culture.

1417 East Miner Street • Arlington Heights, IL • 60004 • 1-847-255-8309

www.handsaroundtheworld.com

Fusion Program - The FUSION Program Summer Day Camp is open to all youth ages 7-12 with a particular focus on children who come from more than one cultural and/or racial community experience. FUSION offers a fun and supportive environment where youth can share, explore, and celebrate the richness and complexity of mixed heritage. <http://www.fusionprogram.org/>

FUSION - c/o iPride - PO Box 11811 - Berkeley, CA 94712

AFRICAN AMERICAN RESOURCES:

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans

<http://www.iowa.gov/dhr/saa/index.html>

The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans (ICSAA) is a state agency that exists to address the needs and concerns of Iowa's African-American citizens. Since it was established by the Iowa Legislature in 1989, the ICSAA has been a division of the Department of Human Rights and serves as an advocate for African-Americans in Iowa.

AfricanAmerican.com

The source for news, entertainment, sports, health, and information for the African American community. www.africanamerican.com

African American Yearbook

African-American Organizations, Publications, Radio Stations, Churches, and more

www.africanamericanyearbook.com

African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa,

55 12th Ave SE - Cedar Rapids, IA 52401 - 877-526-1863 - www.blackiowa.org

They offer exhibits on the history of African and African Americans in the United States, with emphasis on Iowa. School tours and group tours are available. Available for rental is the spacious Aldeen Davis Celebration Hall. Educational sources include a reference library and historical collection/archives for research, plus the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) offering statewide program access. The Nikee Museum Store features exotic one-of-a-kind gifts for every taste

African American Web Connection www.aawc.com

Good selection of mostly popular web pages on topics such as art, authors, history, and other index sites; also includes annotated listings for online periodicals, resources for children, and a directory of

churches.

African-American Business Association of Des Moines, Iowa

<http://www.aabaofdesmoines.org/index.html>

The AABA's mission is to advocate and promote the development of African-American owned businesses with the goal of creating a firm economic base that support the self-determination and survival of the African-American community. Extensive list of African American owned businesses and other resources.

Black Voices

African American culture and community news at AOL Blackvoices. Family, health, and entertainment. www.blackvoices.com

Footsteps: Celebrating African American Heritage and Achievement

This online magazine celebrates the heritage of African Americans and explores their contributions to our culture. www.footstepsmagazine.com

National Black Child Development Institute

NBCDI's website includes information on membership, public policy, resources, and a calendar of upcoming events. www.nbcdi.org

Black American History: A website detailing the history of black people in the United States. www.africanaonline.com

Black Families Online: For complete information on websites listing products, services, and information aimed at Black families, the book Black Families Online by Stacey B. Montgomery can direct you to hundreds of online resources for Black parents, kids, educators, and anyone interested in multiculturalism. www.blackfamiliesonline.com

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP):

The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. www.naacp.org/home/index.htm

ASIAN AMERICAN RESOURCES

Asian American Dreams book by Helen Zia

Asian Community Online (ACON)

This site provides links to various aspects of Asian culture, including Asian studies, advocacy, culture, education, health, sexuality, and women. www.acon.org

Asian Nation

Welcome to Asian-Nation, your one-stop information resource and overview of the historical, demographic, political, and cultural issues that make up today's diverse Asian American community. You can think of Asian-Nation as an online version of "Asian Americans 101."

www.asian-nation.org/index.shtml

The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC): NAPALC works to advance the legal and civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans through litigation, education and public policy. www.napalc.org

National Korean American Service and Education Consortium

This national organization seeks to educate and empower Korean American communities nationwide. www.nakasec.org

Mam Non Organization -- a Michigan-based group whose many activities serve the greater Vietnamese community, including providing public education on issues faced by Vietnamese-American families and transracial adoptees. www.mamnon.org

Suggested Reading:

Dim Sum, Bagels and Grits: A Sourcebook for Multicultural Families, by Myra Alperson
www.americanadoptions.com/adopt/transracial_adoption

History of Korean and Chinese Adoptions:

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2000/firstpersonplural/historical/choice.html>

The Transracial Korean Adoptee Nexus

www.kadnexus.wordpress.com

Asian American Net

Offers links to organizations of Asian descent in America. www.asianamerican.net

The Asian American Cybnauts offers Asian American Community Links at http://www.janet.org/~ebihara/aacyber_community.html

The Asians in America Directory is a growing list of organizations, associations, companies, agencies and other resources that serve the interests of the APA community.

www.asiansinamerica.org/directory/directory.html

Model Minority: A Guide to Asian American Empowerment

The mission of ModelMinority.com is to provide this scrutiny in every possible way, so as to educate, inform, provoke, and inspire movements by individuals and groups toward Asian American empowerment. Through ModelMinority.com, we intend to provide the Web's richest collection of research articles, commentaries, stories, poems, pictures, and other documents on the Asian American experience. <http://modelminority.com>

NATIVE AMERICAN RESOURCES

Native American Transracial Adoptees Tell Their Stories book by Rita Simon & Sarah Hernandez

Far From the Reservation: The Transracial Adoption of American Indian Children by David Fanshel

Indian Country Magazine at www.indiancountry.com

Tribal Scholarship website: www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/tribalscholars.pdf

First Nations Child and Family Caring Society: www.fncfcs.com

National Indian Child Welfare Association: www.nicwa.org

Native Web: This site contains over three thousand links to various aspects of Native American culture and history. www.nativeweb.org

National Indian Education Association (NIEA) provides workshops on bias against American Indians and works to ensure culturally accurate and appropriate curricula in schools.

NIEA - 700 N. Fairfax St, Suite 210 - Alexandria, VA 22314 - 703-838-2870

Native American Sites and the home of the American Indian Library Association Web Extensive information on history and culture, including extensive resources:
www.nativeculturelinks.com/indians.htmlb

The Culture of Native American Indian tribes

www.essortment.com/in/Culture.Native.American/index.htm

Information on various Native American Tribes, history, art, legends, and much more

<http://www.thewildwest.org/interface/index.php?action=185>

Encyclopedia Smithsonian – American Indian History and Culture

http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia_SI/History_and_Culture/AmericanIndian_History.htm

Index of Native American Resources on the internet:

www.hanksville.org/NAresources

“Adopting a Native American Child” (an internet article found on www.adoption.com) provides a historical overview of the Indian Child Welfare Act, the Indian Adoption Project, and several other relevant issues. www.adopting.adoption.com/child/adopting-a-native-american-child.html

WWW Virtual Library – American Indians

Virtual library of the Indian culture with an index of resources on the web, including culture, history, language, health, and art. www.hanksville.org/NAresources

HISPANIC RESOURCES

Interpreters

www.iowa.gov/dhr/la/Pages/Official%20Page.htm

Raising Nuestros Ninos: a book by Gloria Rodriguez

El Centro Latinoamericano – a Latino resource center for northeastern Iowa

500 E. 4th Street - Waterloo, IA 50703 - 319-287-6400

The HOLA Center

618 E. 18th Street - Des Moines, IA 50316 - Phone: 515-299-HOLA - www.holacenter.org

The HOLA Center is a one-stop shop in Des Moines, Iowa, that provides services in both Spanish and English to those in need. The HOLA Center has established important partnerships with providers, including neighborhood policing, legal assistance, health care, banking, and family counseling.

Southwest Iowa Latino Resource Center

<http://www.exitovideos.com/partners.htm>

This center is located in Red Oak, Iowa and provides the following services:

Translation/Interpretation * Access to WIC, Head Start, Health Services * Housing Assistance * Employment Assistance * Immigration Assistance * Monthly Public Health Vaccination Clinic * Parents as Teachers * Material Assistance * Referrals * Seminars & Conferences * Liaison to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes * Community Advisory Services * School sign-up & orientation

National Council of La Raza (NCLR): NCLR is dedicated to reducing poverty and discrimination and improving educational and professional opportunities for Hispanic Americans. www.nclr.org

Hispanic Educational Resources

828 Scott Ave - Des Moines, IA 50309 - (515) 282-6542 - www.herdm.com

Hispanic Educational Resources (HER) is derived from the first non-profit Latino community center in Des Moines. It began as the United Mexican-American Community Center (UMACC) in 1983, established by community leaders and volunteers. Today, HER serves over 200 families a day in one of three focus areas: The Xochipilli Children's Center, Family Services, and Outreach.

GOALS:

- Provide all services in English and Spanish
- Focus on educating and empowering the entire family: children, parents and teens
- Be a safe and healthy place for the community
- Not to discriminate against anyone, regardless of color, race, ethnicity, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, age, or any other distinguishing factor
- To treat everyone with respect and dignity

Latin American Network Information Center

www.lanic.utexas.edu

Enlaces América

Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights

<http://www.enlacesamerica.org/>

GOVERNMENT

Iowa Division Of Latino Affairs

John-Paul Chaisson-Cardenas MSW, Administrator
Department of Human Rights - Division of Latino Affairs
Lucas State Office Building - Des Moines, IA 50319
(515) 281-4080 or 1-877-330-3516 (toll free)
www.state.ia.us/government/dhr/la/index.htm

Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons

www.hhs.gov/ocr/lep/revisedlep.html
www.hhs.gov/ocr/lep/guidance-espanol.html en espanol

EDUCATION

New College-planning Web Resource Available For Hispanic Families

www.yesican.gov
www.yosipuedo.gov

HEALTH

The National Alliance For Hispanic Health

www.hispanichealth.org

Hispanic/Latino Portal For The Prevention Of Alcohol, Tobacco, And Other Drug Abuse

www.latino.prev.info/intro.html
www.latino.prev.info/intro-sp.html en espanol

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

www.teenpregnancy.org
www.teenpregnancy.org/hispanic/hisptip.htm

The National Information Center For Children And Youth With Disabilities

www.nichcy.org nichcy.org/spanish.htm en espanol

MISCELLANEOUS

Iowa's Latino Heritage Festival

www.latinoheritagefestival.org

Day Care – Bilingual Day Care Center

Xochipilli Children's Center (Des Moines, IA) – call 515-242-0225

Web Search Engine In Spanish

www.buscamundo.com

Web Translators

<http://www.babelfish.com/Translations.html>

The Spanish Electronic Librarian

www.sol-plus.net/bib.htm

EUROPEAN AMERICAN CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The Center for the Study of White American Culture supports cultural exploration and self-discovery among white Americans. It encourages a dialogue among all racial and cultural groups concerning the role of white American culture in the larger American society. The Center operates on the premise that knowledge of one's own racial background and culture is essential when learning how to relate to people of other racial and cultural groups. A premise of this site is that the task of building genuine and authentic relationships across racial and cultural lines is crucial to the future well-being of America. www.euroamerican.org/

ARAB AMERICAN RESOURCES:

The American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC): The largest Arab American grassroots organization in the U.S., defends the rights of people of Arab descent and celebrates their rich cultural heritage. www.adc.org

Interpreters

www.iowa.gov/dhr/la/Pages/Official%20Page.htm

LANGUAGE

A Step-by-Step Guide to Raising Bilingual Children; an article by Christina Bosemark and links to other resources. <http://adoption.about.com/od/parenting/ss/bilingualchild.htm>

TOOLS TO HELP YOU ASSESS YOURSELF

Project Implicit's - Psychologists at Harvard, the University of Virginia and the University of Washington created "Project Implicit" to develop Hidden Bias Tests to measure unconscious bias. Take a test and see what may be lingering in your psyche. <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit>

Hidden Bias: A Primer - About stereotypes and prejudices, about hidden bias, the affects of prejudice and stereotypes, what you can do about them. www.tolerance.org/hidden_bias/tutorials/index.html

Below the Surface: A Self-Assessment Guide for Anyone Considering Adoption Across Racial or Cultural Lines by Beth hall and Gail Steinberg.

Important Foster Care and Adoption Websites/Resources

Child Welfare Information Gateway: www.childwelfare.gov

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption: www.davethomasfoundation.org

National Adoption Center www.adopt.org

North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC): www.nacac.org

Foster Care and Adoptive Community www.fosterparents.com

Foster Parent College: www.fosterparentcollege.com

National Foster Parent Association: www.nfpainc.org

National Foster Care Coalition: www.nationalfostercare.org

New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children, Inc. : www.nysccc.org

Rainbow Kids: www.rainbowkids.com



Iowa Foster & Adoptive Parents Association

6864 NE 14th Street, Suite 5

Ankeny, IA 50023

800-277-8145

www.ifapa.org

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