If you want to start this conversation in your own family…

▪ Bring it up. Start noticing race out loud in your everyday conversation with your kids.
▪ Ask questions. Make observations about who is included. Say, “I’m enjoying this [book, movie, show], but I notice that all of the characters are white. What do you think about that?”
▪ Notice inequality and read about the history of discrimination that underlies it.
▪ With young kids, talk about kindness and meanness, fairness and unfairness. Even very young kids can understand justice in these terms.
▪ It’s okay not to know something. Learn alongside your kids. Say, “I don’t know the answer to that, but let’s find out!”
▪ Set an example. If you hear someone say something racist, speak up. Your kids will follow your lead, especially when challenging racism among other white people.
▪ Name whiteness. Kids notice difference, and it’s okay to acknowledge it. Say, “Have you ever noticed how white our community is?”
▪ Talk about history. Learn about and acknowledge the indigenous people who lived where you do for centuries before it was taken from them.

Things to keep in mind...

▪ It’s never too late to start this conversation.
▪ You don’t have to get it right the first time.
▪ Having white privilege doesn’t mean that we don’t have hardships or struggles in our lives. It just means that we have some advantages, simply because we’re white—advantages that people of color don’t have.
▪ Racism is like a smog that we all breathe in. You can be both a good person and someone who has absorbed a lot of racist ideas. Uncovering our own unconscious biases and prejudices doesn’t mean you’re bad, it means you have the courage to be honest.
▪ If you’re worried about protecting your kids, consider that this conversation has many benefits: it will build intimacy and trust in your family, make your kids more resilient, more empathetic, and better friends. It helps make a difference for the next generation.

Get creative with it!
If you’re a parent or a teacher and you have a story about talking to children about race and racism, we’d love to hear it! Leave us a voicemail at (617) 600-8419.