

Bridge DEIJ Newsletter

Dear Bridge Community,

As we head into our first wintry month, we wanted to give you a few DEIJ updates.

- Several Bridge teachers will be participating in a workshop for educators, led by the Rokeby Museum, entitled "Teaching about Slavery, Whiteness, Racism and the Underground Railroad in the North".
- One of our committee members will be participating in an anti-racism workshop for Vermont educators entitled "Shifting Culture Toward Anti-Racism in Majority White Spaces".
- We have drafted a DEIJ Mission Statement and are currently in the process of revising it. We will submit it to the board for feedback at their November meeting.

And, as always, we warmly welcome your participation in and feedback on our work. Thank you!

Why talk about race and racism with children?

Kids notice racial differences.

Multiple psychological studies have shown that:

- babies can recognize racial differences as early as 3-6 months of age.
- starting at preschool age, kids begin to demonstrate racial bias; they associate non-dominant racial groups with negative traits and whites with positive traits.

Talking can help and silence can hurt.

- Jessica Sullivan, PhD, an associate professor of psychology at Skidmore College, points out that "Children are capable of thinking about all sorts of complex topics at a very young age. Even if adults don't talk to kids about race, children



Upcoming Community Events

November

"No Ocean Between Us: Art of Asian Diasporas and the Caribbean, 1945-Present". Special Exhibition at the Middlebury College Museum of Art. Free and open to the public. This exhibition features approximately 70 important works by Latin American and Caribbean artists of Asian heritage.

Opportunities for Community Involvement

Migrant Justice Network

<https://migrantjustice.net/about>

A Burlington-based organization that advocates for migrant workers and is also active here in Addison County. You can sign up for action alerts and find information about events and how to get involved in their work.

will work to make sense of their world and will come up with their own ideas, which may be inaccurate or detrimental."

- If we don't talk about race or acknowledge difference we are still communicating. Silence or avoidance is a powerful message that can tell a child that something doesn't matter or that it's "bad" or "wrong."

How to talk about race and racism with kids?

- **Make it age-appropriate:** For example, teach younger kids to appreciate and value differences (such as differences in skin tone - which they notice just as readily as hairstyles or height) and give them vocabulary to talk about differences. As they age, expand this vocabulary, enrich historical learning around difference, and make understanding about "fair" and "unfair" treatment of different people increasingly complex.
- **Make it ongoing:** Don't have a talk about race and racism just once. Instead, continue to fold it in to different conversations as you move through different social spaces, as you read new books or watch old familiar movies, and as you have different family experiences.
- **Model imperfection:** We are all learning and growing. If you don't know something or are unsure of how to respond to a child's question, let them know you will find out or work together with them to learn more.

Resources:

Professor Erin Winkler article "Children Are Not Colorblind: How Young Children Learn Race" (<https://inclusions.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Children-are-Not-Colorblind.pdf>)

"Beyond the Golden Rule: A Parent's Guide to Preventing and Responding to Prejudice" published by the non-profit Learning for Justice (https://learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/beyond_golden_rule.pdf)

PBS Kids Resource Guide "Talking to Young Children About Race and Racism" (<https://www.pbs.org/parents/talking-about-racism>)

8 Podcasts that help you talk with kids about race (<https://bellocollective.com/8-podcasts-that-help-you-talk-to-kids-about-race-e5a4b639ac3f>)



Community Involvement, cont.

Abenaki Cultural Use Land Access Project

<https://familyforests.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/FAQs-Abenaki-Cultural-Use-Land-Access-Project1.28.21.pdf>

If you are a private owner of forest land, you can find information here on how to make your land available to Abenaki tribal members for foraging and hunting. Above is an image of the Abenaki flag.

SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) Middlebury

<https://surj.org/chapter/surj-middlebury/>

A local chapter of a national organization that "brings hundreds and thousands of white people into fights for racial and economic justice."