

# Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Adoptive Families

In the past, the prevailing advice for parents who adopted children of a race or culture different from theirs was to love and raise them from a “colorblind” perspective, as if the races and cultures of the children were not an important part of their identities. But adults who were raised with this approach and other experts say that when parents ignore their child’s racial and cultural origins, the journey to a healthy identity can be lonely, confusing, and even traumatic. Understanding and acknowledging differences in race and culture and playing an active role in creating a home and family life that reflect your child’s heritage are critical steps in parenting in diverse adoptive families.

This factsheet provides information to help you and your family support your child in developing a healthy racial and cultural identity and live a vibrant multicultural life. It discusses the importance of examining your thoughts and biases and preparing your child to live in a society where race has a

major impact on individual lives. You can use this factsheet as a resource for information on some of the potential rewards and challenges that come with choosing to live a multicultural and multiracial family life.

## WHAT’S INSIDE

Supporting your child’s racial and cultural identity

Embracing life as a racially and culturally diverse family

Developing strategies to prepare your child for racism

Conclusion

Additional resources

References

## Common Terms for Racially and Culturally Diverse Adoptive Families

An adoption in which adoptive parents are of a different race and/or culture from their children is usually referred to as a “transracial adoption” or “transcultural adoption.” Adoption agencies, your child’s caseworker, or other child welfare professionals may use these terms when discussing relevant training or services to support your family. But, for many people, these terms do not address the depth or complexities associated with their lived experience. For the purposes of this publication, we use “racially and culturally diverse families” to best describe the common realities of people raised in such families.

Race, culture, and ethnicity are terms that we often confuse; we think they mean the same thing, but they are different.

- Race is a concept developed by society to give groups of people more power than others. Race is not based on genetics or science.
- Culture is taught to us by other human beings. Generally speaking, we learn culture by speaking with and learning from our elders, people who pass down and share information, generation to generation. While this factsheet focuses on race and culture, it also acknowledges the significance of ethnicity for children and parents in racially and culturally diverse adoptive families.
- Ethnicity has to do with nationality. A person can be classified as Asian, but that doesn’t tell us their ethnicity. Korean, Chinese, and Indian are all Asian, but all are different ethnicities.

Resources for racially and culturally diverse families are available from Information Gateway on its [Adoption by Family Type: Racially and Culturally Diverse Families](#) webpage.

## SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S RACIAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Helping your child develop their identity is among the most important roles you'll play in parenting a child. Identity develops over time and in response to life experiences. As the starting point of your child's search for their place in the world, you need to develop strategies and remain diligent in your child's progress toward a positive and healthy identity. Your child's racial and cultural identity is an important part of their overall identity, as significant to them as racial and cultural identity is to you and all human beings.

Racial and cultural identity is molded by a variety of experiences, both within and outside the family. It is critical that your individual identity does not dominate your child's understanding of their identity. Understanding your racial and cultural identity and engaging your child in frank discussions about interactions and experiences will help provide an important understanding of what they think and feel and will help to promote their healthy sense of self-worth and personal identity. But it is also very important to recognize that racism exists. Children of color who are members of racial groups targeted by people using social myths to exert power need help recognizing racist behavior, so when it is directed toward them or others, they know that it is wrong and not their faults.

### EXPLORING YOUR RACIAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

To help your child understand their racial and cultural identity, you need to understand your own. Especially for parents who are part of the dominant culture, developing that awareness takes self-exploration,

understanding the environment you live in, and considering what that means for the needs of your child. Exploring the realities of race and the differences between races and how they impact individual lives in your culture will help you understand your own biases and prejudices. This may allow you to act in ways that can transform your family's usual way of doing things (Jackson & Samuels, 2019).

**“Even if you aren’t attached to your own racial or cultural origins, how you socialize and condition within your family and community can reinforce negative feelings about race and culture.”**—Jackson & Samuels, 2019

In exploring your racial and cultural identity, it will help to be familiar with the following terms that affect how you parent a child of another race/culture:

#### **Multiracial/multicultural parenting:**

An approach to parenting children from different racial and cultural backgrounds that honors your child's race and culture in your existing family system; identifies strategies to help your child develop a positive and proud identity; and helps your child and family prepare for racism, including cultural humility, implicit bias, microaggressions, and colorism (see the definitions that follow)

**Cultural humility:** Recognition of the importance of listening to learn about, honor, and incorporate children's cultural identity and respecting families from varying races, religions, ethnicities, and economic statuses; understanding that you are always evolving—

emotionally, socially, and intellectually—and the more open you are to new ideas, the more you will understand an individual’s culture; respecting differences in values of children and birth families; and acknowledging that learning about other cultures is an ongoing process. [Reflections on Cultural Humility](#) offers extensive definitions of cultural humility.

**Implicit bias:** Unconscious attitudes toward others often based on stereotypes that contradict a person’s conscious beliefs. We all carry implicit bias, no matter our race or the impact of racism we have personally experienced. Learning to recognize it in ourselves is important to avoid the negative effects of the way we will otherwise inadvertently understand and represent children. [Project Implicit](#) offers free online tests that may reveal information you do not know about your own biases.

**Microaggressions:** Common daily insults, invalidations, slights, or attitudes that communicate hostile racial judgments. Microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional and can focus on race, culture, and adoption status. [“If Microaggressions Happened to White People”](#) shows how people of color deal with racial microaggressions every day.

**Colorism:** Discrimination based on skin color and valuing one skin color or shade over another, whether within your family, racial or cultural group, or across groups. [“Colorism: The Difference Between Racism and Colorism”](#) discusses the impact skin color has on everyday life.

If you’re a white parent adopting a child of another race, refer to [White Parents Identity](#) to learn about how your relationship to race and identity affects your child and family. Also, listen to [“A Mother Reflects on Privilege,](#)

[Adoption and Parenting ‘Without Perfection’](#) to hear one adoptive mother talk about how raising two black sons—one adopted from foster care and the other from Haiti—and two white birth daughters helped her understand white privilege.

All parents adopting a child of another race or culture may benefit from taking a family self-assessment regarding transracial adoption. Pact, An Adoption Alliance, offers for purchase [Below the Surface: A Self-Evaluation Guide for Anyone Considering or Participating in Adoption Across Racial and Cultural Lines](#) to help you think about how your attitudes about race and culture may affect how you parent in a multicultural family.

Refer to [Proactive Engagement: The Adoptive Parent’s Responsibility When Parenting a Child of a Different Race](#) from the National Council For Adoption for more helpful information to support your child’s identity, including a suggested framework that you can follow based on your child’s age and developmental stage.

## HEALTHY RACIAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY FORMATION

Healthy racial and cultural identity involves positive esteem for yourself and others who share your racial and cultural background. Helping your child develop a healthy identity requires you to take an intentional and ongoing role. It may be difficult for children from other countries to develop a healthy sense of self without immersion in the culture of their birth countries. Similarly, immersion in a social group that shares a child’s ethnic and cultural experiences may be equally important. For example, a child born in China needs to have people in her life who can help her understand not only what it means to be Chinese but also Chinese American.

Children who have been adopted and youth whose parents do not share their race need their adoptive parents to not only help them build relationships with people who share their racial and cultural heritage but to develop those relationships for themselves as well. Children should never feel like they are the exception in their own life. This means that parents must also connect to the local communities of their child's racial group. Your children should know that they have the freedom and flexibility to explore these relationships openly and independently as well. This is how children form allies and mentors from groups with whom they identify. Remember, that means connecting to adults who share their racial experience, not just other children. Assure your children that having a healthy racial or cultural identity does not mean they are rejecting you as their adoptive parents or your family's heritage and traditions. They deserve to explore all their identities, both that of their adoptive family but also that of their birth family.

[“International Adoptions and Connecting to a Local Community”](#) shares advice for parents of a child adopted from abroad on how to help their child understand and learn about his or her different culture.

For children of color, healthy identity development requires coping skills that build resilience against hurtful societal messages, particularly messages that idealize the white race, even among people of color. For children of color adopted into families of a different race and culture, this means that they have a basic and developing connection to the race and culture of their birth. They understand the complexity of identity, in an age-appropriate way, and they are proud of the racial differences between them and their adoptive parents and siblings. Communities of

color have many strong and positive legacies that often go untaught in school or mainstream culture, which tends to focus on Eurocentric history. Children need to have positive images and messages about their history and their communities to counterbalance the negative messages. For a child to achieve this strong and healthy identity, the entire family needs to love these racial and cultural differences and engage in ways that enhance their own identities (Dinwoodie, 2016).

**“We need to really see a child to show them love; and when we see them, we have to see all parts of what make them who they are. We have to celebrate all parts...so when they look in the mirror they love what they see.”—Dinwoodie, 2016**

Every child is on an individual journey to form a racial identity. A child adopted as an infant, for example, and a child adopted as a school-aged child will have different connections to their birth communities. Early memories may positively resonate with some children while others may feel a fundamental disconnection that creates pain and confusion surrounding identity. To help your child on this journey, you can:

- Go beyond superficial cultural differences. Merely celebrating Chinese New Year or Kwanzaa, eating Ethiopian food, or watching an occasional video with Latino characters does not provide the human connections required for your child to build and maintain a real sense of belonging to and ownership of their cultural heritage.



- Represent your child’s racial and cultural heritage in meaningful ways, including through the people who come into your home and in your child’s school environment.
- Integrate culturally relevant traditions, holidays, and rituals into daily home life for the whole family so your child can see themselves in a multitude of ways and know that their cultural traditions are valued and considered as important as your own. Consider also buying toys and books, listening to music, and watching movies that reflect your child’s heritage.
- Know what life is like on a day-to-day basis for your child. Know the possible danger that your child faces, particularly as a teenager and young adult of color (e.g., bullying by classmates, unfair punishment in school, being pulled over by the police).

As your child grows older, they will mature, ask questions, and explore their sense of racial and cultural belonging. They will determine who their true peers are and grapple with how they do and do not fit in with their adoptive family and with communities outside that family. Most people do not grow up without racial role models in their family, so adopted children have a different experience that deserves to be acknowledged. You can help them by recognizing the identity issues they face and supporting open lines of communication. Some children and youth may find support in peer counseling groups in which they can talk with other adoptees in diverse families.

For more tips on race and identity development, refer to the following resources:

- [“Race and Identity in Transracial Adoption: Suggestions for Adoptive Parents”](#) offers tips on exploring racial identity and its impact on international adoption.

- [“Transracial Adoption: Love Is Just the Beginning”](#) shares how one family handles being a family of African American, Native American, Latino, and European American individuals.
- [“The Realities of Raising a Kid of a Different Race”](#) discusses possible dangers children of color encounter in their daily lives.

## EXTENDED FAMILY AND CREATING A FAMILY IDENTITY

Most parents do not choose to adopt children of a different race without a great deal of thought and preparation. Yet many parents ask their extended families to do just that. While you may have considered the reactions and feelings of your relatives as part of your home study process, these feelings may not have been fully resolved. Some in your extended family will need to get used to the adoption, especially if they have not been involved in the process. Give them time to adjust and to learn about your child. If anyone in your extended family simply cannot accept your child as a family member, remember that every child deserves to be safe from racism in the haven of their family. You may need to assess whether this is a time to restructure your relationship with this person to protect your child from ongoing contact that might be damaging.

Creating a strong family identity requires that all members feel included. Having a clear sense of family identity also may help you and your child decide how to respond to questions and comments from outsiders (see *Developing Strategies to Prepare Your Child for Racism*).

## Training and Related Skills for Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families

The Children's Bureau awarded a grant to Spaulding for Children to develop the [National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster and Adoptive Parents](#) (NTDC). The NTDC training program and curriculum is in development and will be pilot tested and evaluated in various States and a Tribal community. NTDC will be designed for families who are adopting through an intercountry or private domestic process as well as those fostering and/or adopting in the public child welfare system.

Adoptive families who participate in the NTDC training program can expect to achieve greater levels of competence in caring for children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.

To provide adoptive parents the training, knowledge, and ongoing skills they need to effectively parent children and youth from other races or countries, NTDC has identified several areas of knowledge and skills that apply directly to parents who adopt children who are of another race/culture. Courses include Multiracial/Multicultural Parenting and Cultural Humility.

The final curriculum will be available for free across the United States in 2022.

## EMBRACING LIFE AS A RACIALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE FAMILY

As a parent, you can make sure that you and your child have as many opportunities as possible to interact with people of your child's race and culture and to develop a positive self-image. Your children may be more likely to feel connected and comfortable when their circle of playmates, peers, and trusted adults includes people who look like them, and you will learn much about your child's cultural community by being with other parents and adults who share your child's race or ethnicity. Much of how a child's identity develops is influenced by immersion and exposure and encountering those who are around them. They internalize what they see and what they experience. They can learn the language and cultural mores of people they look like and with whom they share a racial identity, allowing them to [codeswitch](#) as they need or choose. This affects their self-esteem and sense of identity. They can learn important life lessons from adults of their same race about being a person of a particular race in American society. They may experience—with both children and adults—positive social interactions and behaviors that can help them understand and believe they are fully members of their racial group, rather than feeling like outsiders. This section provides suggestions for ways to build a multicultural and multiracial life for your child and your family.

### TALKING ABOUT RACE AND CULTURE

Talking about race can be difficult, but it's especially important for adoptive parents of children from another race or culture. If you assume there are no differences between races and cultures, or shouldn't be, you

may create relational distance, silence, and mistrust between you and your child (Jackson & Samuels, 2019). Talk about race and your child’s cultural heritage in positive terms, beginning when your child is very young or whenever your child joins your family. By the time your child starts school, they will need tools to answer questions by themselves, including appropriate racial terms. You can make them aware of terms that are inappropriate and unacceptable, so that they can recognize them and consider how to respond.

If you start the conversation when your child is young, when they’re older they will have a level of comfort in discussing more complex issues, coping skills, and risks of living in a society where race affects how people are treated. It may be helpful to discuss key historical events around race and culture. Use these events to provide context for the racism they encounter.

Visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) webpage, [Talking About Race](#), for digital tools and other resources to help you have constructive talks on race topics including bias, antiracism, racial identity, and systemic oppression. Although NMAAHC focuses on African American culture, many of the resources and concepts apply broadly across race and culture.

[Talking Race With Young Children](#) offers tips for conversations about race, racism, diversity, and inclusion.

[“Talking About Race With Our Children, Whatever Their Race”](#) offers suggestions about raising children of another race from a white adoptive mother of a Latina daughter and a Black son.

[“Raising a Child of Color in America—While White”](#) offers parents a three-step process to talk with their children about the realities of racism.

[“How White Parents Can Talk About Race With Their Children of Color”](#) provides advice to guide discussions about race in multiracial families.

### **Ongoing Contact With Your Child’s Birth Family**

Nowadays, it’s common and encouraged that adoptive and birth families maintain some level of ongoing contact with each other. In diverse adoptive families, regular contact may be especially important because the birth parents or other birth relatives represent the child’s race and heritage. Birth family relationships may be complex for the child, however, especially if the birth family is the only representation of the child’s race and culture. For more information on maintaining contact between adoptive and birth families, read Information Gateway’s [Helping Your Adopted Children Maintain Important Relationships With Family](#).

### **LIFE WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY AND MAKING CONNECTIONS**

Take a look at your community and surroundings and ask yourself how reflective it is of your child and whether it is welcoming and comfortable for your child and family. This involves looking at your extended environment—for example, your neighborhood, stores where you shop, community organizations and social groups, places of worship, health care providers,



and schools. Children tend to do better academically and socially when they are not the only person of their own race in their town, classroom, and other areas where they spend a lot of time.

Schools are particularly important as most children spend a significant portion of their developmental years there—dealing with peers, making friends, and learning from teachers and others. Consider all aspects of your child’s school experience, including the curriculum, faculty, and student diversity, to determine what kind of fit the school will be for your child. Consider what you can supplement at home and what you cannot. Often the experience of being immersed in their own racial group is not something that is easily found outside of the school or other important social settings. Also, in school and at other places outside of the home, your child may learn the cultural norms of their own group. Exposure to peers and adults who share their racial and cultural heritage will make their response to identity issues less difficult. You can take the opportunity not only to expose but to actively involve your child and your entire family in groups where his or her race or ethnic culture is shared by most of the participants. This may mean driving to another neighborhood or attending events and being part of teams or activities in another part of town.

Similarly, your family’s neighborhood may limit your child’s access to role models of the same race or culture that can help nurture their healthy identity development (Jackson & Samuels, 2019). Awareness of visible racial and ethnic differences starts at an early age, so it’s important to have connections to people who look like your child; otherwise your child

**“[My husband] didn’t see his parents subjectively experience racism. He did however get to see his parents fight racism through their active involvement in social justice issues. For me racism is one of those realities I expected would happen but hoped never would happen. So when it happened, I wasn’t surprised. It is the world that we live in.”—Roorda, 2015**

may assume that you prefer people of your own race. If your life and social activities do not already include significant connections to people who are the same race or culture as your child, it will take time to create and nurture these connections. Suggestions for doing this include the following:

- Finding a local community organization or a social, religious, or recreational group that includes adults of your child’s ethnic or racial background and where you can participate as a family on a regular basis. Ideally, this group should have a majority of adults who share your child’s ethnic or racial background.
- Making a conscious effort to expand your usual social activities to include more people whose race and culture are different from yours. You may also want to identify an informal mentor for yourself from your child’s racial or ethnic group. These activities may begin to prepare you to teach your child about different people and different ways of life.

- Locating a specific place in your community, such as a school, playground, social group, or parent network, where your child will be able to play with other children of different races and backgrounds, including children who share your child's racial heritage. Find other parents to talk with about raising a child of your child's race in your community. Be sure that at least some of the parents you approach include those who are parenting children who are born to them. While there is also great benefit to adoptive parent groups, it is important not to limit your connections to those parents.
- Creating a list of types of professionals you may need as a parent, for example, pediatricians, dentists, ethnic-specific hair care salons, or child care providers, then reviewing this list to see where you can find providers of your child's heritage to meet your family's needs. Asking other parents of your child's race or culture for recommendations can be a great way to start off the conversations that may lead to making connections.
- Finding TV series, podcasts, or books that are targeted to members of your child's race—and being sure to watch, listen to, or read regularly. This may even mean learning a new language. Begin collecting children's books, family videos, and art for your home that reflect your child's culture and diverse families and people in general. Find as many different local resources for these products as you can, as this may give you other opportunities to interact with people from a wide variety of races, ethnicities, and cultures.

### **Special Note About Adopting an Older Child**

Older children bring their previous life experiences to their new adoptive families. If you adopt an older child, they will be making a transition not only to new caregivers but also to being part of a family and perhaps a neighborhood and community of a different race and/or culture than their own. In this case, your child may have already formed an identity and may need time to develop a comfort zone with people of your race. It is important to maintain the positive connections that already exist in your child's life. As much as the child will need to adjust to life in your family and neighborhood, you and your family can help by incorporating connections to your child's former neighborhood and friends. If those connections are lost, children may internalize the message that permanence and membership in a safe family are somehow not associated with people of their own race.

### **DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR RACISM**

Although race is not supported by science, the concept of race is real, and it has a real impact on life in society. Societies use race to create and reinforce racism, including class systems of power and privilege that benefit some and exclude or deny others (NMAAHC, 2020). Furthermore, American society's historic preference for racial sameness in

families prejudices racially and culturally diverse adoptive families (Jackson & Samuels, 2019). Strangers may make remarks or ask questions about your family because they see that you and your children do not look alike. Others may make racist comments. You need to prepare your children and yourself for both situations.

[“Adopted Child: Strangers Asking Questions”](#) explains how to respond when strangers ask intrusive questions about your child.

### **ADDRESSING AND FIGHTING AGAINST RACISM**

Your job as a parent is to be part of difficult talks with your children and to let them know that it’s okay to struggle with topics of race openly. It is important to talk with your child about race and racism before they experience prejudice. Remember for children of color this is a matter of when, not if. You may worry that if you point out differences or talk about racism, your child will feel less connected to you or be more likely to become a victim of racism instead of developing inner strength. But if parents are not able to discuss racial bias and differences, their children will be left to grapple with these critical issues alone with a limited world view and what they learn from society.

Your child needs to learn how to respond to the racism they may experience in different circumstances and from people with whom your child has relationships. For instance, responses to peers may be different from responses to authority figures or adult family members. These responses may range from ignoring the comment to seeking help or support from others to confronting the person or the system.

Children ask lots of questions as they notice people of different races, and these questions can prompt you to respond in the following ways:

- “When people of one race get better things or better treatment, that is called racism. Our family doesn’t think racism is okay. No one is better or should be treated better than anyone else.”
- “Some people prefer to be around others who are like them. Sometimes, they try to get their own way by making it harder for people who are different.”
- “Some people call people of different races bad names or mistreat them in other ways. If you hear this happen or it happens to you, it is wrong, and I would like to help. Let me tell you a story about something I heard, and let’s brainstorm some things that I could say to help.”

You are an important role model for your children against the effects of racism. Some strategies to address and fight against racism include the following:

- Fill your child with positive remarks and feelings about who they are and help them to practice responding to racist comments.
- Talk about race and your child’s cultural heritage in positive terms beginning when your child is very young or whenever your child joins your family. This may help to build self-esteem that your child can draw on when he or she is older.
- Educate yourself and your child about the positive values of your child’s cultural history. Point out positive role models who are from the same culture as your child’s.

- Make clear your commitment to fight racism. Replace negative meanings of race and multiracial identity with positive messages. Confirm that racist things happen, and that while they hurt everyone of all races, they especially hurt people who are the target of the racism. Work with your family to promote equality across the board—not just when it involves your child. Emphasize not only your refusal to engage in racist activities or language, but also your commitment to actively fight racism.
- Make a clear and visible commitment to authentically loving people of other races.

Visit the NMAAHC [Being Antiracist](#) webpage to learn about types of racism, questions to ask yourself, and how to handle racist situations. For additional learning materials on antiracism, including books and essays, visit the website of [Ibram X. Kendi](#), one of America’s foremost historians and leading voices on antiracism.

### **FAMILY RESPONSE TO OUTSIDERS’ QUESTIONS**

You do not owe strangers the answer to any question, but you may give your child, your child’s siblings, and yourself permission to handle intrusive questions like “Where did he come from?” and “Whose child is he?” Talk with your children about strategies and responses they might want to try. You may not be with your children when they encounter outsiders’ questions or remarks, so it’s important that they know appropriate ways to respond.

The *W.I.S.E. Up! Powerbook* curriculum provides practical guidance and specific examples that teach school-age children how to **W**(alk away), **I**(gnore), **S**(hare), or **E**(ducate)

in response to questions or remarks from outsiders. The goal of this curriculum is to teach children that they have control over how they respond to outsiders about their adoption experience. By working together to come up with a range of ideas about handling attention and curiosity from others, children and parents can be allies, reinforcing a feeling of belonging, and counteracting the message of isolation that can otherwise undermine children’s sense of connection.

The [W.I.S.E. Up! Powerbook](#) is available for purchase from the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.). C.A.S.E. also offers for purchase a webinar, [“W.I.S.E. Up! for Parents: Empowering Children to Handle Questions/Comments About Adoption.”](#)

### **CONCLUSION**

As adoptive parents to a child of another race or culture, consider what you may do differently in and out of your home to meet your child’s needs and help them develop a healthy racial and cultural identity. Develop comfortable ways to talk with your children in age-appropriate conversations about diversity. Such conversations may support your diverse family’s sense of unity, especially if your children feel isolated because they look different or they are in situations where they feel they need to explain or even defend the composition of their family. If you have many friends of different races and cultures, your child will see that you value people of different backgrounds. If together your family develops a family identity that celebrates the individual members and the strengths of the unit, you and your children will be better prepared to face the challenges that the outside world may present.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources are for parents considering or already in racially and culturally diverse families:

[Child Welfare Information Gateway](#). Includes several web sections on racially and culturally diverse families:

- [Adoption by Family Type: Racially and Culturally Diverse Families](#)
- [Adopting Children From Another Country](#)
- [After Intercountry Adoption](#)
- [Perspectives of People Raised in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families](#)

[Pact, an Adoption Alliance](#). Offers resources, support, and community for adoptive families to children of color.

[Transracial Parenting Training](#). The North American Council on Adoptable Children offers parents training on race and cultural issues involved in adopting a child of another race and/or culture.

[NPR's Code Switch podcast](#). Covers the overlap of race, ethnicity, and culture—how they play out in our lives and communities and how all of this is shifting.

[EmbraceRace](#). Provides parents with articles, webinars, action guides, podcasts, and other resources to meet the challenges they face raising children of color in a world where race matters.

### ARTICLES

- [“4 Unique Challenges Faced By Transracial Adoptees”](#) addresses unique challenges experienced by adoptees and services as a guide for hopeful parents planning to adopt a child of a different race.

- [“25 Helpful Resources for Transracial Adoptive Families”](#) includes links to books, podcasts, articles, videos, films, and TV series as well as organizations to follow on social media.
- [“Transracial & Transcultural Adoption: Preservation, Policy, and a Personal Perspective”](#) provides historical background of intercountry adoption in the U.S. and the personal story of an African American woman who was raised in a multiracial and multicultural family and is now parenting in a multicultural family.
- [“How to Be an Anti-Racist Adoptive Parent”](#) teaches parents how to talk with their children about systemic racism and commit to working toward justice.
- [“Debunking the Most Common Myths White People Tell About Race”](#) addresses common excuses white people make about race and how to respond.

[The Adopted Life Episodes](#), a web series created by a transracial adoptee, Angela Tucker, features one-on-one conversations between herself and transracially adopted youth with the goal to elevate the adoptee voice and provide trustworthy open-source content to the public.

### CELEBRITY VIDEOS

- [Aaron Judge](#) is a baseball player who writes about being adopted as an infant by a white couple.
- [Colin Kaepernick](#) is a former NFL player who was adopted at 5 weeks old by a white couple and talks about being adopted.



## REFERENCES

Dinwoodie, A. (2016). Attention adoptive parents: Have you started a conversation about race? In S. O'Connor, D. Christian, & M. Ellerman (Eds.), *Black anthology: Adult adoptees claim their space* (1st ed., pp.65–68).

Jackson, K. F., & Samuels, G. M. (2019). *Multiracial cultural attunement*. NASW Press.

National Museum of African American History and Culture. (2020). *Race and racial identity*. <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/race-and-racial-identity>

Roorda, R. M. (2015). *In their voices: Black Americans on transracial adoption*. Columbia University Press.

### SUGGESTED CITATION:

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2020). *Parenting in racially and culturally diverse adoptive families*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau



This material may be freely reproduced and distributed. However, when doing so, please credit Child Welfare Information Gateway. This publication is available online at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/parenting-diverse-families>.