



HighScope Educational Research Foundation

Racism, Violence and Our Children: The Path Forward

A Message from Dr. Cheryl Polk

Dear Colleagues,

The recent events in Charlottesville and other parts of the country involving the Ku Klux Klan and, neo-Nazis, and the violence and death these groups inspired, remind us that even in the wake of much progress towards a diverse and just society, there is still much work to do. For some it may feel like we have taken two steps forward, only to take four back. Some may find it difficult to believe we are living through this time in the 21st Century when we thought the most difficult struggles were behind us. However, in the midst of these unfathomable events taking place in our country and around the world right now, we must not lose sight of the important work we do to support very young children and their caregivers, teachers, families, and communities.

Every new day presents a unique opportunity to create and shape the world we envision for ourselves, our children, and our children's children. Having courageous conversations within our own families and communities can only strengthen our resolve to live in a safe and equitable world. This opportunity also extends to our work at HighScope and the following are strategies we can engage in as colleagues in the HighScope community:

- Make it a habit to check in with and talk to each other informally on a regular basis. Find out how your colleagues are doing generally. Go out on a limb and check in with someone you don't usually see in the course of your day or week.
- Acknowledge that this is a difficult time for all of us and recognize that these events can be unsettling and create feelings of insecurity and fear.
- Create a discussion group or talking circle among colleagues, both within your department and across departments, that meets periodically to address major events affecting our communities and those we serve in our work.

When we feel safe enough to share and acknowledge our feelings about these events in the larger world, and empathize and listen to one another, we provide a great example for the teachers, caregivers, parents, and children we are working to reach. Let us always do our part at HighScope and continue to lead by example.

RESOURCES

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1598-racism-and-violence-using-your-power-as-a-parent-to-support-children-aged-two-to-five#chapter-1044>

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/on-parenting/we-need-to-deal-with-our-discomfort-and-talk-to-our-kids-about-racism/2015/06/30/ec6db7e8-1a9a-11e5-ab92-c75ae6ab94b5_story.html

<http://creativewithkids.com/resources-for-talking-to-kids-about-race-and-racism/>



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