

CONVERSATION TIPS

What if children make negative comments or laugh about certain facial features?

To help avoid this, we recommend having an open conversation with children before starting these activities about the norms of the space and the kind of community we want to cultivate. You can draw on previously agreed-upon classroom norms or create them collaboratively with children in the moment, focusing on ideas like:

- showing others and ourselves kindness and compassion
- treating everyone with respect and care
- doing our best
- supporting each other

If children do make negative comments, stay calm and remember that this is pretty normal kid behavior. That said, it's our responsibility as caregivers to address it. Here are some options:

- Ask questions. "Why makes you say that? Do you think that saying something like that could be hurtful?" Give children time to actually think about these questions and engage in a conversation.
- Prompt perspective-taking. "How would you feel if someone said something like that about you?"
- State your own position. "I would feel hurt if someone said that about me or about someone that I love."
- Refer back to family and community values. "We want everyone to feel safe and accepted in our home/community."
- Celebrate difference. "What may seem weird or funny is really just different from what you're used to seeing. One thing that makes human beings so interesting is that we're all different and there's so much variety in how we look, how we think and talk, and what our bodies can do. How can we honor and appreciate all those differences instead of using them to put each other down?"

For more on how to address hurtful language directed at kids of color, check out the EmbraceRace action guide "[How to Talk to Kids about Microaggressions](#)."

How do I help kids celebrate racial and cultural differences?

As you honestly and courageously discuss the pain and struggle related to race and racism in our nation, be intentional about also creating space for discussion of positive experiences around race. This helps to build resilience and joy, particularly among children of color. To do this, find books that center the experiences of people of color within an uplifting narrative and/or invite all children to share family stories that celebrate who they are. For book suggestions, check out the resource "[20 Picture Books for 2020](#)" on the EmbraceRace website.