

Pointers For Parents

Tips To Help Children Cope With Prejudice

Web-based Resource Guide Helps Promote Diversity And Respect

(NAPSA)—Today, in nearly every classroom in the United States, there are children from a wide variety of racial, cultural and economic backgrounds, as well as children with learning and physical challenges. More than ever before, as the population of the United States becomes increasingly diverse, it is essential that children learn to live, work and play alongside others of different backgrounds and abilities.

National PTA has developed tools to help both parents and teachers address issues of diversity, including prejudice and discrimination and the importance of respecting others' differences. According to National PTA President Shirley Igo, teaching children the value of diversity begins with modeling respectful, sensitive and fair behavior.

"Children's opinions and ideas are influenced by what people around them do, think and say," Igo said. "Parents and teachers must be aware and actively address issues that can affect children's attitudes, relationships and self-esteem and lead to negative behaviors like intolerance and bullying."

For example, ask other adults to refrain from making derogatory comments or inappropriate jokes in front of you and your children, or point out other instances of intolerance or inequity to children and explain that they are unacceptable. Help children find ways to create positive change, such as volunteering to clean up negative graffiti or writing letters to a television station that promotes stereotyped programming.

Other tips the National PTA suggests are:

- Accept each of your children



Efforts to fight prejudice begin at home.

as unique and special by recognizing and appreciating his or her individual qualities. Children who feel good about themselves are less likely to be prejudiced.

- Help your children become sensitive to other people's feelings. When personal conflicts occur, encourage your children to think about how the other person may be feeling.

- Provide opportunities for your children to interact with and learn about people from other backgrounds through extracurricular activities like sports teams, music groups or school clubs, and through books, television programs, concerts or other events that show positive insights into other cultures.

In addition to these suggestions, National PTA has developed "Respecting Differences," a free, Web-based resource guide for parents and teachers that promotes diversity, encourages understanding and inclusiveness in schools, and provides resources and action steps for making respect for differences a reality.

To read "Respecting Differences" and to find more information on how to help your children succeed, visit National PTA's Web site at www.pta.org or call 1-800-307-4PTA.