

## HOW TO HAVE CHALLENGING, YET IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR KEIKI



*Lately, with the news of hate crimes and violence, these issues can have adverse effects on our children and how they see the world. These social issues can be witnessed through social media, conversations with family and friends, and even media images can harm children's health. Here are some tips from The Parent Line on how to talk to your keiki to help address these tough, but important, social issues.*

# The Parent Line

Check in with your children. Ask what they know, what they've seen, and how they are feeling. Reassure them it's normal to feel these emotions. You know your child best and what information they can handle that is developmentally appropriate for their age. Encourage open communication and create a safe space for your children. Offer your love and support and give them your undivided attention when they want to communicate with you.

Practice what you want to say before you say it. Conversations about social issues can bring up your own fears, uncertainties, and discomfort as a parent. Having a conversation with another adult first may help with being comfortable talking about tough topics. Also think about questions your children might ask as you have these adult conversations and how you might answer those questions.

Be aware of your own biases. You can have many conversations with your children, but children really pay attention to adult behaviors, so practice what you preach and make sure what you say matches your behaviors. Children learn best by imitation, and role modeling has a huge impact on how your children will learn.

Watch for changes in your children's behavior. Everyone reacts differently to certain situations and issues. Some may be aggressive, while others will become withdrawn or scared. If you are concerned that your child may be struggling with anxiety, fear, or distress, contact their pediatrician or a mental health provider for additional support.

Read books that allow for children to learn about different emotions and feelings. This can also be done through singing songs, storytelling, and artwork. As parents, make note of this and use this as a learning opportunity to talk honestly about their feelings. Also, playing games or doing activities together to address their emotional health can improve parent-child interactions and can lead to further discussions.

Instill confidence in your child by ensuring they hear from you and others they love that their skin, hair, facial, and other physical features are beautiful. Educate them with your family history and traditions. Surround your home with books, magazines, pictures, and cultural artifacts so they feel proud to be in their skin and confident in the way they carry themselves.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND FURTHER SUPPORT WITH TALKING TO YOUR KEIKI, PLEASE CALL THE PARENT LINE AT (808) 526-1222 OR TOLL-FREE 1-800-816-1222 OR GO ON OUR WEBSITE [WWW.THEPARENTLINE.ORG](http://WWW.THEPARENTLINE.ORG).**