

Coming Together

Family Reflections on Racism

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We would like to thank the children and families who shared their experiences of the world around them, especially amidst a very tumultuous year.

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Children today are growing up during turbulent times: not only did the COVID-19 pandemic force the abrupt shuttering of schools and workplaces in the spring of 2020, but the nation has also seen an unprecedented surge in media coverage of violent acts of racism, leading to highly visible protests in communities across the country. Just one of these events would have had the potential to cause an inordinate amount of stress for families, but the past year has featured an unprecedented set of challenging conditions.

At Sesame Workshop, we know that young children are observant witnesses who are actively trying to make sense of the world around them. Studies have confirmed that a child's identity plays an important role in their development and experience of the world around them¹ and that children begin learning what identities mean from an early age.²

Even before the first episode of Sesame Street went on the air in 1969, founders Joan Ganz Cooney and Lloyd Morrisett were committed to using educational media to help children develop a healthy sense of identity. Fifty years later, in 2019, we wanted to learn how families are helping to prepare their children to thrive in an increasingly diverse and complex society.

In 2019, Sesame Workshop conducted a national survey of parents and educators, *Identity Matters*, to better understand both how children are shaped by their own ethnic and racial identities and how they learn about the identities of others.³ The study revealed that parents and teachers believe social identities, such as race/ethnicity, impact children's pathways to success—but that most were not engaging their children in conversations about social identities.³ Those findings, coupled with events of the past year, inspired us to further explore how children themselves are feeling about the world around them in 2020-2021, especially as issues of race/ethnicity become increasingly front-and-center.

¹ Bennett and Sani, *The Development of the Social Self*.

² Schachter and Ventura. "Identity Agents."

³ Kotler, Haider, and Levine. "Identity Matters."

The surge in racial justice protests that began in May 2020 sparked a reckoning around the country. Families struggled to make sense of the murders of Black people, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and terms like “systemic racism” and “white privilege” were openly discussed in the media. In light of these events and the COVID pandemic, Sesame Workshop wanted to find out how children are experiencing or processing the events that have been at the foreground of so many adults’ concerns over the past year. How are children feeling about the world around them? How are parents talking about these issues at home?

In June 2020, we used online research panels to recruit families with children between six and eleven years old for participation in our longitudinal study. We collected data in two waves—June 2020 and January 2021—with the same 147 pairs of parents and their children. For both surveys, children answered five general open-ended questions about their hopes, fears, and the world around them using drawings, photos, writing, and videos. The diary questions **intentionally did not mention racism or protests**; this was so that we could learn how salient and top-of-mind these issues were for children. Following diary responses, parents and children also responded to a set of open- and closed-ended survey questions specifically about race and racism.

KEY FINDINGS

Children are aware of racism and deepening their understanding of it. How they think about racism is affected by their own racial/ethnic/cultural identity and personal experience.

- + **Almost all children are aware of racism,** or the idea that people of different races are not treated fairly in this country. Many have witnessed and/or personally experienced discrimination themselves.
- + **Children’s understanding of racism appears to have deepened over time,** demonstrated by their more nuanced descriptions of these events and people involved. Parents also agree, noting that their children more deeply believe that racism is wrong and something can be done to address it.
- + How children think about racism differs according to their own racial/ethnic/cultural identity and personal experience. **During last summer’s protests, concerns about racism were heightened to top-of-mind for children, especially Black/African American children and those living near protests.** In January 2021, with decreased media coverage of protests and racial violence and increased media coverage of COVID and vaccines, issues of racism appeared to be less prominently top-of-mind and COVID concerns more prominently top-of-mind for some children. However, they are thinking about racism more critically and also with some hope.

+ Most parents, especially those of Black/African American children, reported that they had been talking with their children about race and racism before the protests and are still discussing these topics now, sensing an increase in the importance of them. **Through these conversations, parents likely supported growth in their children’s understanding of racism and development of hope.**

+ **Parents reported increased comfort with these conversations.** Although they want to be the ones teaching their children about racism, they are also comfortable drawing upon books, school, other family members, and media.

Note: Data for 2021 were collected in January, before the March 2021 Atlanta shootings and Derek Chauvin trial. We acknowledge that as anti-Asian violence and reactions to the trial continue to increase in media visibility, children’s thoughts and feelings about racism may continue to evolve. Our present findings do not fully reflect these events.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings from these surveys raise several issues about social identity and how parents are discussing issues of race and racism with their children. There is a large body of existing research on children and the development of racial bias; we also know that children’s sense of identity develops at an early age. How can we translate this knowledge to help parents,

educators, media developers, and policymakers support children who are grappling with racial/ethnic differences and systemic inequities?

In today’s always-connected world, children are exposed to a variety of messages about race and racism. Parents and educators can help children by having conversations about what they are seeing—even when there are fewer immediate news stories about acts of violence bringing these issues to the foreground. This is a timely opportunity for media developers to provide age-appropriate content to support family discussions around what they are seeing and experiencing; such support would also aim to promote the continuation of these discussions at times when families may be seeing or experiencing racism a little less prominently.

Part of our mission at Sesame Workshop is to create resources that help parents and caregivers have difficult conversations with children about sensitive topics. We use research-based evidence to help support parents and caregivers in navigating issues like racism and empathy with the goal of building both understanding and hope in their children. Findings from this study are already informing our Coming Together initiative, including a racial justice educational framework, ongoing research, and a rolling release of new content on [SesameWorkshop.org/ComingTogether](https://www.SesameWorkshop.org/ComingTogether). These include videos, articles, and activities that are designed to provide families with tools to help build racial literacy, have open conversations with young children, to become upstanders against racism, and more.

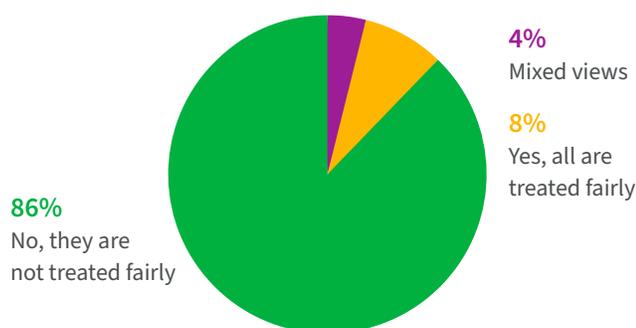
Children's Understanding of & Responses to Racism

About 86% of children believe that people of different races are not treated fairly in this country, and many say that they themselves have witnessed this unfair treatment.

In January 2021, the majority (86%) of children of all races/ethnicities said that they do not believe people of different races are treated fairly. Many explained that this is because they themselves have witnessed unfair treatment of people of color, especially Black people. Children also witnessed and recalled a fair amount about

the summer protests in June 2020. Almost all (93%) of them could share something about racism or protests when asked specifically about those topics—including that the protests began after someone was shot or killed, Black Lives Matter, and police involvement.

DO YOU THINK PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT RACES ARE TREATED FAIRLY IN THIS COUNTRY?



“ I do not think that different races are treated fairly in this country because, I can see just by looking around, that not as many people of color are hired to work in the government, and sometimes store owners or workers might treat a person of color differently or call them names.
GIRL, 11, ASIAN, JAN 2021

“ I don't think people get treated the same. One day I went to do laundry with my mom and the white guy yelled at her for no reason. He told her she couldn't sit at his laundry table. I was scared. Mom told the bad guy we lived in a free world.
BOY, 8, BLACK/AA, JAN 2021

“ I heard some of the names of the people who died bc of racism, and there were, I saw, all of the people carrying signs and yelling black lives matter, no justice, no peace, things like that.
BOY, 10, NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER, JUNE 2020

“ No, I don't. I see on the news how some black people are treated and sometimes when I go to the store with my mom, I see how some people from a different race treat black people.
GIRL, 7, BLACK/AA, JAN 2021

“ No, I see the way people of non-white ethnicity are treated differently.
BOY, 11, WHITE, JAN 2021

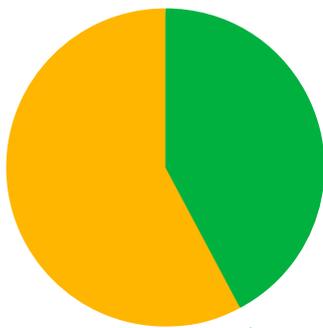
Children have not only witnessed unfair treatment, but nearly half (42%) of these children have personally experienced discrimination of some kind, with more parents of Black children likely to report this.

Children are not only aware of and witnessing unfair treatment, but they also have personal experience with it. A little less than half (42%) of parents report that their children have personally experienced discrimination based on factors such as race/ethnicity, income/socioeconomic status, or family structure.

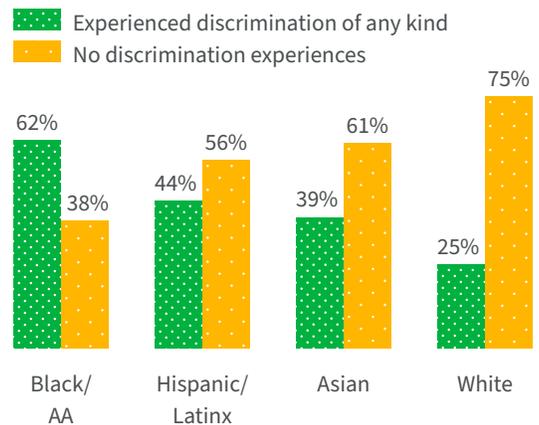
More parents of Black/African American children (62%) report experiences of discrimination than do parents of White children (25%). Looking at the specific types of discrimination, one third of parents (27%) report that their children have experienced racial/ethnic discrimination. Fewer note discrimination based on income, family structure, religion, disability, or gender.

AS FAR AS YOU KNOW, HAS YOUR CHILD PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION BASED ON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?

58%
No, my child has never experienced discrimination



42%
Yes, my child has experienced discrimination of some kind



Race/ethnicity



Income/SES



Family structure



Religion



Physical/cognitive disability



Gender



Other part of their identity

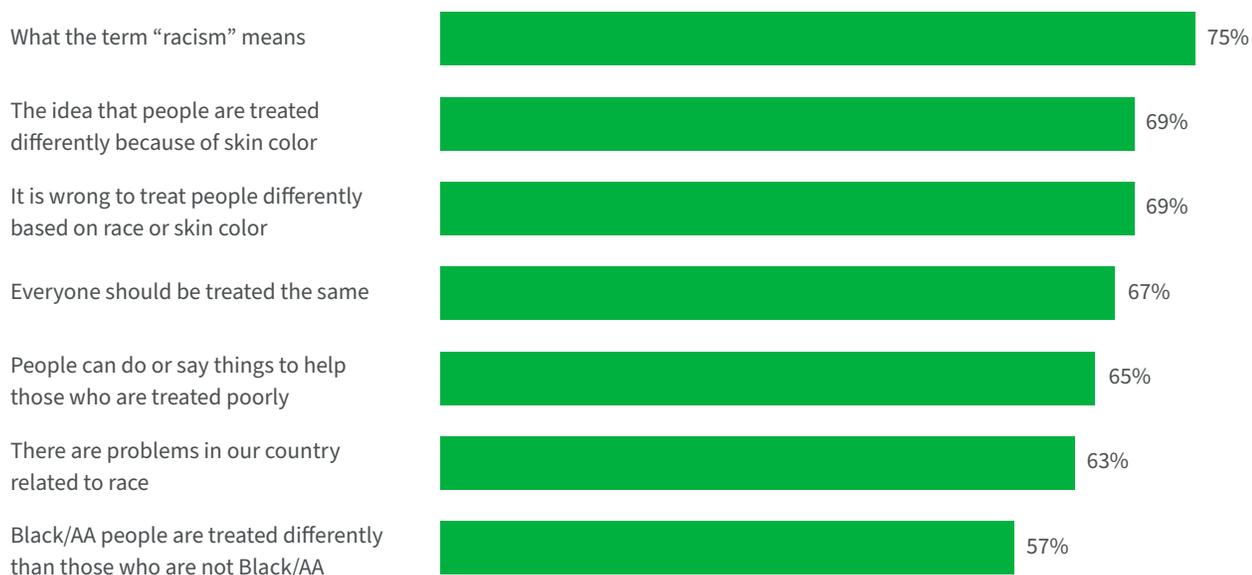


Parents believe that their children have deepened their understanding of racism between June 2020 and January 2021, reporting that their children more fully believe how real and wrong racism is and that something can be done to address racism.

When asked about their children’s understanding of racism, more than two thirds of parents believe that their children understand the idea of *racism* (that people are treated differently because of skin color (69%)) and the *term “racism”* (75%) more deeply in January 2021 than they

did in June 2020. The majority of parents also believe their children more deeply understand how wrong racism is, that something can be said/done to help those who are mistreated, and that racism problems in our country are real—particularly believing this is true for those who identify as Black/African American.

% OF PARENTS WHO SAY THEIR CHILD UNDERSTANDS THIS BETTER/BELIEVES THIS MORE IN JANUARY 2021 THAN LAST SUMMER



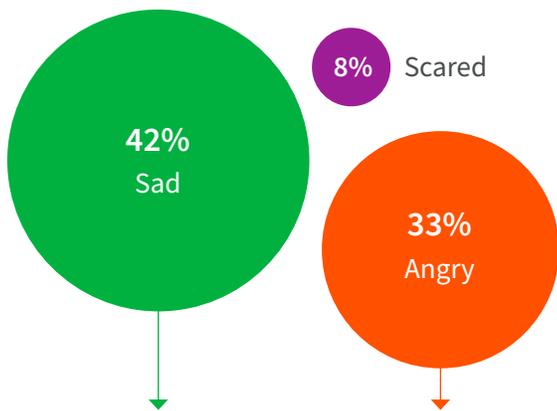
Children themselves express this deeper understanding as they describe Black people feeling a more nuanced range of emotions in January 2021 than in June 2020.

When asked specifically about how Black people felt in both waves, children were able to identify several emotions. In June 2020, most children described Black people's feelings as sad, angry, or scared. These emotions remained prominent in January 2021, but there also appears to be growth in understanding the wide variety of

emotions that Black people may be feeling. In 2021, sad and angry made up fewer than half of responses and gave way to other, more nuanced emotions such as attacked, scared, innocent, hurt, and happy.

Note: Emotions shown without a % represent fewer than 5% of responses.

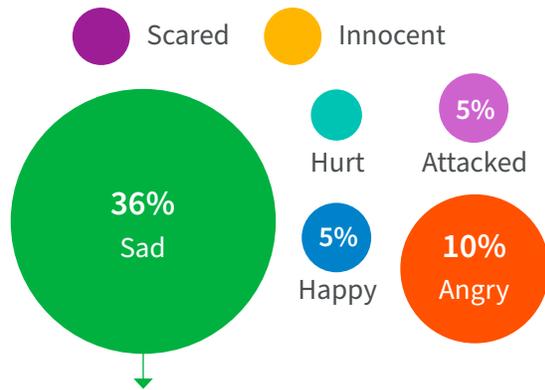
JUNE 2020: HOW DO YOU THINK BLACK PEOPLE FEEL? WHY?



“ They are sad and angry because it’s sad when people die when they didn’t do nothing wrong. Some people get angry because people died but also, they get angry because people break their stuff and stole their stuff.

GIRL, 6, HISPANIC/LATINX, JUNE 2020

JAN 2021: HOW DO YOU THINK [BLACK PEOPLE] FEEL?



“ I think they are racially profiled by everyone. Someone can see a black boy with a hood on and think he is bad and it’s not ok. I think they/we feel badly about it. It is very hurtful and scary.

GIRL, 11, WHITE & BLACK/AA, JAN 2021

“ [They] feel that they are treated as lower class. Many are upset and they go on protests about their condition.

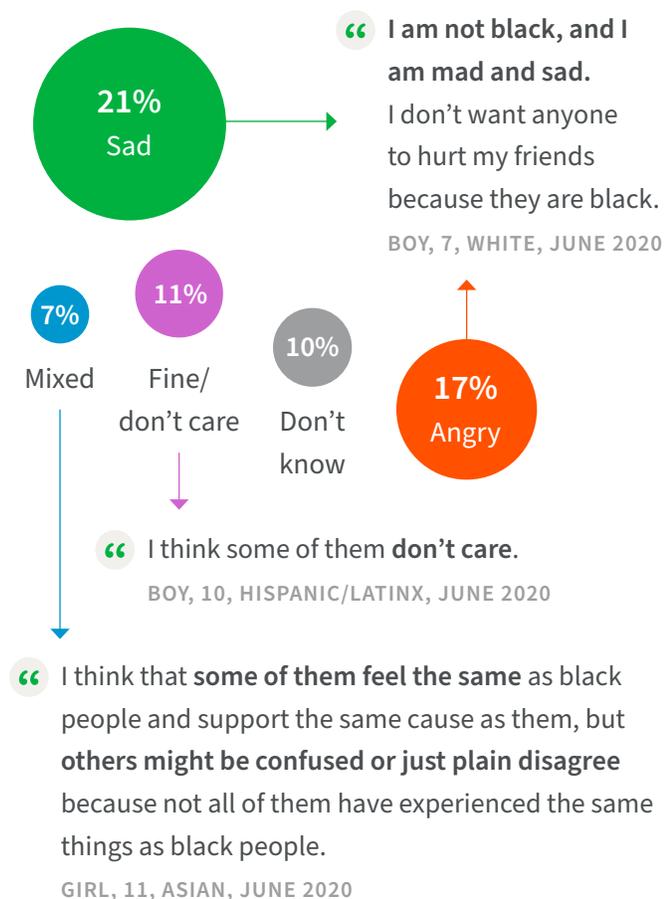
BOY, 11, ASIAN, JAN 2021

Children also understand and describe significantly more mixed feelings among people who are not Black in January 2021, compared to June 2020.

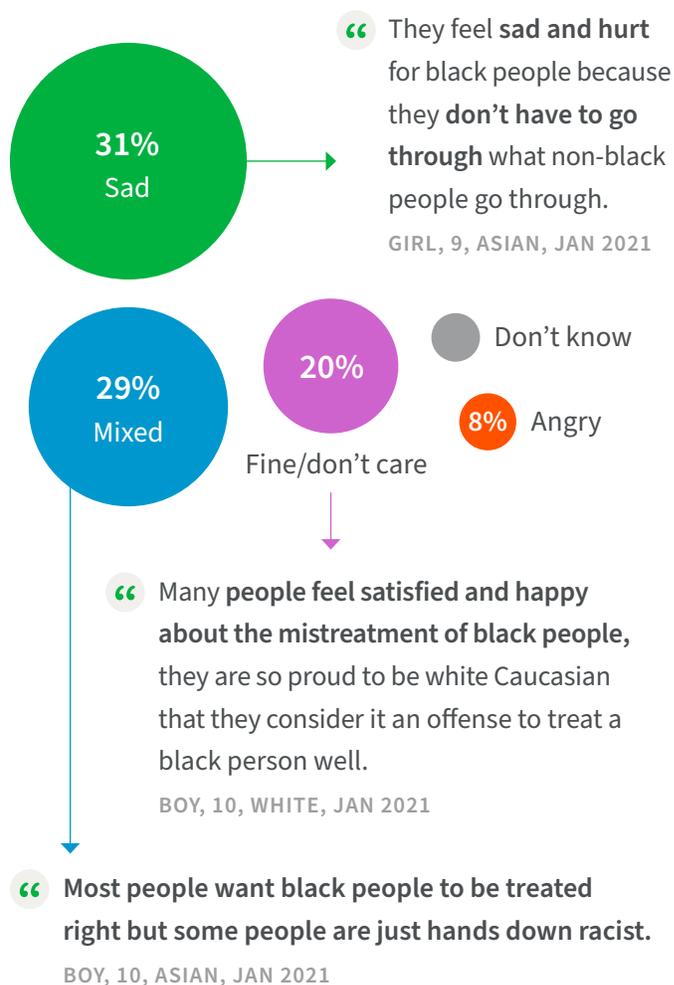
When asked in January 2021 specifically about how they think people who are not Black are feeling, children discussed mostly the same variety of emotions as in June 2020—sad, angry, fine/don't care, mixed. However, there were more

mentions of mixed emotions (e.g., some people are sad/mad and some don't care) and fewer mentions of anger. This shift may be due to the space children had to reflect more deeply on last summer's media-covered violence and protests.

JUNE 2020: HOW DO YOU THINK NON-BLACK PEOPLE FEEL? WHY?



JAN 2021: HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT BLACK/AA FEEL ABOUT HOW BLACK/AA PEOPLE ARE TREATED?

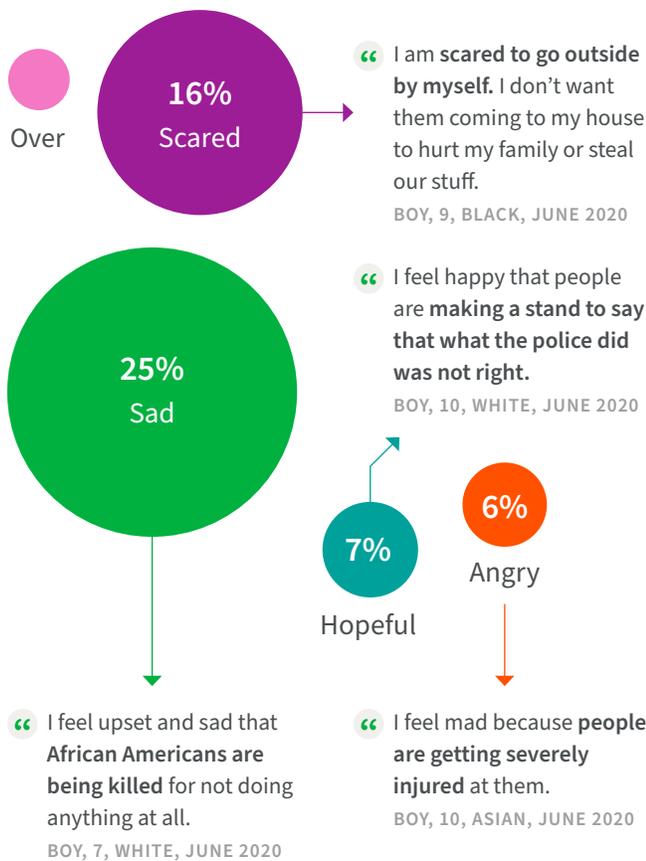


Regarding their own feelings about the 2020 protests, children express less fear and sadness for themselves and more hope for the future in January 2021.

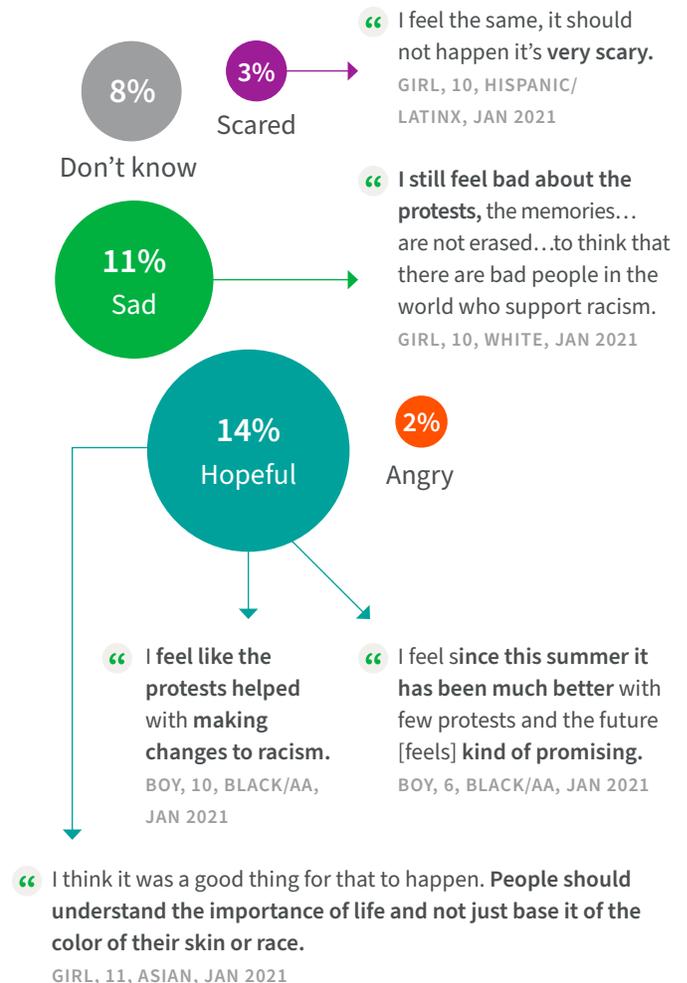
When asked about how they themselves are feeling about the summer protests, children expressed less fear and sadness in January 2021, compared to June 2020. Possibly due to continued conversation, deeper understanding, and some distance from the summer protests, children shared more hope for the future in

January 2021. They are still experiencing sadness about racism, but they also feel like the future can be promising and bring about change. Across questions (especially diary questions about heroes), about one fifth (22%) of children expressed optimism that we are moving in helpful directions for change.

JUNE 2020: HOW DO YOU FEEL? WHY?



JAN 2021: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT LAST SUMMER'S PROTESTS NOW?



Children's Unprompted Thoughts & Concerns

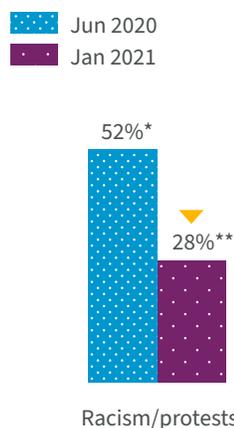
The previous section reflects kids' responses when asked directly about issues regarding racism. To see how top-of-mind their feelings are, this section explores the degree to which they brought up issues of racism spontaneously, when not asked about racism directly.

While children are certainly aware of racism and race-related violence, these issues were more directly “front and center” on their minds in June 2020 during the sharp increase in media-covered racial justice protests following the death of George Floyd, compared to January 2021.

In June 2020, more than half (52%) of the children mentioned racism or protests in response to open-ended questions about wishes for themselves or the world, worries or fears, special powers they would like to have, and identifying who is not being taken care of or has been “left out.” Black children expressed these themes across questions more than White children, often mentioning things like police, justice, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

By January 2021, fewer children (28%), across all races, mentioned either racism or protests in response to general questions. We did see more responses about racism/protests by those children who lived near areas that saw active protests during the summer. Across both timepoints, children express a desire to end racism and recognition of the poor treatment of Black people.

% OF CHILDREN WHO MENTIONED IN AT LEAST ONE QUESTION



* In June 2020, Black children express these themes significantly more than White children

** In Jan 2021, most frequently mentioned by those who lived near summer protests



WISHES

“ I wish for world peace because there is still discrimination, segregation and just really mean people.

GIRL, 9, WHITE, JUNE 2020



WHO HAS BEEN “LEFT OUT”

“ Black people and BLM. What’s wrong with it is that all these cops and white people think they have privilege to come upon us and do different things to us like we are slaves, so I think we are not taken care of.

BOY, 11, BLACK/AA, JAN 2021



▶ PLAY VIDEO

HERO

“ I drew Dr. Martin Luther King. Dr MLK was a hero because he stopped segregation and he protested peacefully. He made Blacks and Whites treated equally. He never once raised a fist but said words peacefully and the impact of this was 10 times greater than if he would fight.

GIRL, 11, ASIAN, JAN 2021

▲ Statistically significance difference between June 2020 and Jan 2021

When asked for their wishes, fewer children mentioned ending racism in January 2021 than in June 2020, but it was still in the top four categories mentioned.

Unprompted mentions of wishes for equality or an end to racism decreased from 23% in June 2020 to 12% in Jan 2021. These January 2021 wishes were reported more by those who live

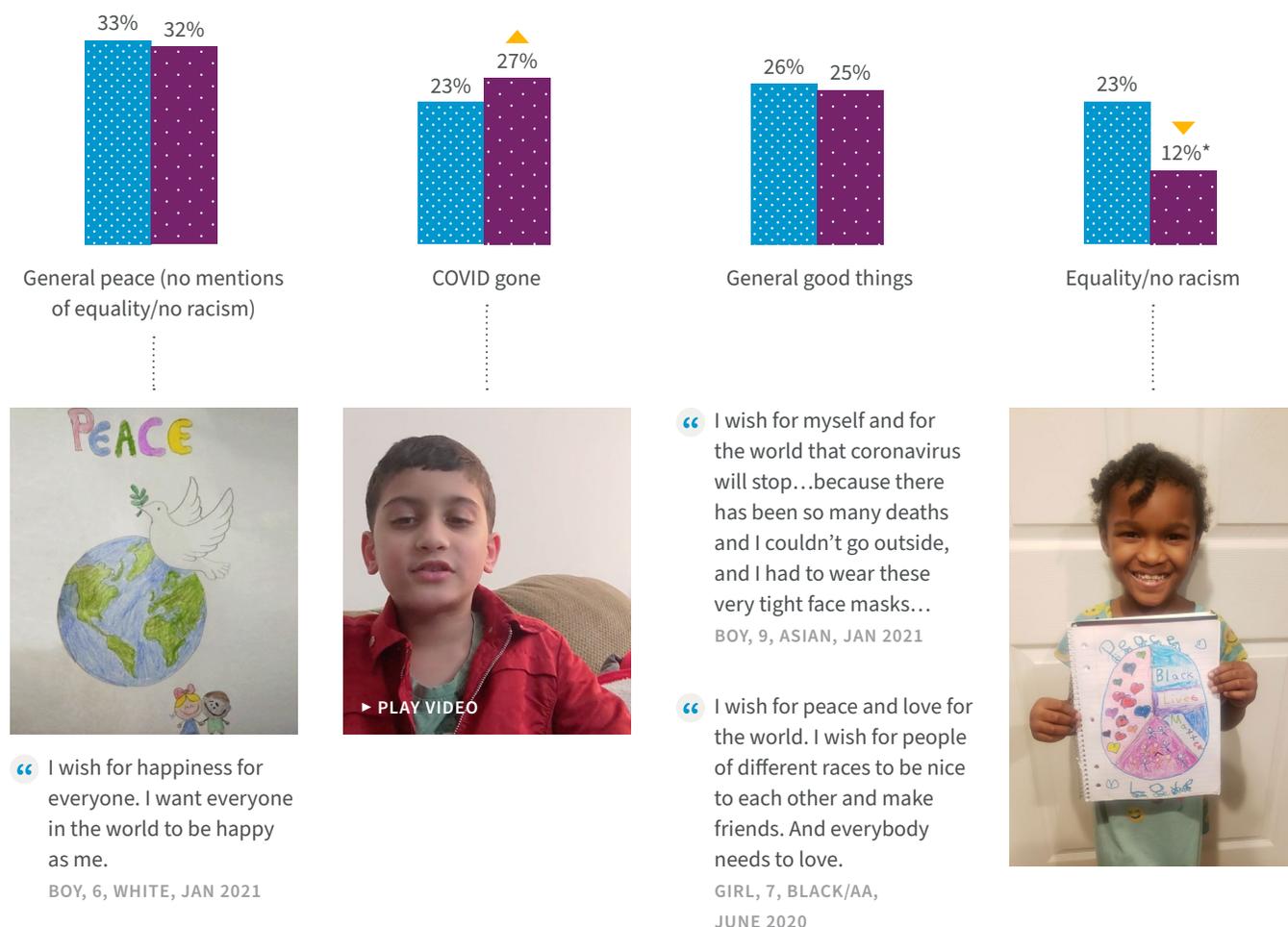
near summer protest areas. With the longevity of the pandemic, wishes for COVID to be gone also significantly increased in January 2021 compared to June 2020.

TOP 4 CATEGORIES: WISHES

 Jun 2020
 Jan 2021

* Most frequently mentioned by those who lived near summer protests in June 2020

▲ Statistically significance difference between June 2020 and Jan 2021



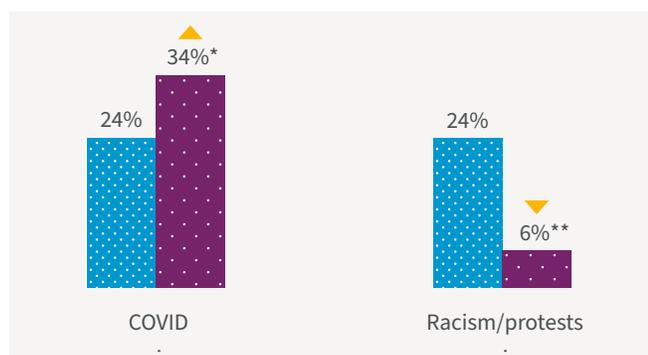
Reported fears of racism or protests have also declined from June 2020 to January 2021.

When asked about their worries or fears, children's mentions of racism or protests declined from 24% in June 2020 to 6% in January 2021. Similar to children's wishes about ending racism, these January 2021

fears were reported more by children who lived near summer protests. Unsurprisingly, with the impact of the pandemic, children's worries about COVID increase in January 2021 compared to June 2020.

TOP 5 CATEGORIES: WORRIES/FEARS

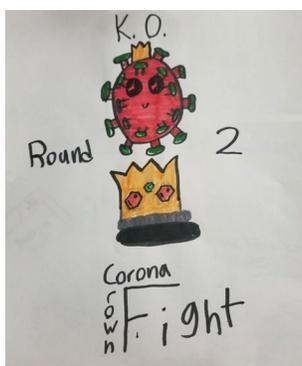
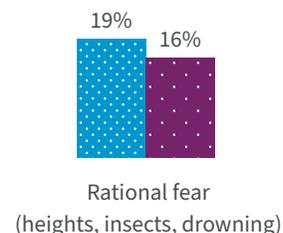
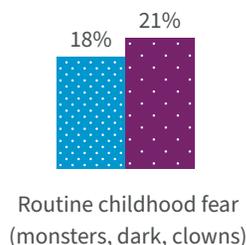
■ Jun 2020
 ■ Jan 2021



* Most frequently mentioned among Asian children

** Most frequently mentioned by those who lived near summer protests in June 2020

▲ Statistically significance difference between June 2020 and Jan 2021



“ I don't want a second wave of covid because I don't like staying home.
GIRL, 11, WHITE, JAN 2021



“ Some people in the world seem to hate people because of their color. I don't understand why that matters. If a person is nice, they may have a good heart.
GIRL, 9, BLACK/AA, JAN 2021

“ I'm worried about people dying in the world because it's not fair...it's not fair to just arrest people because they are just trying to stand up for somebody who says that... and black lives do matter, and they are... they're killing people just for what they're doing... they're killing people for protesting and not listening to them... but they are just following their hearts and their hearts are telling them to stand up for what is right.
GIRL, 8, BLACK/AA, JUNE 2020



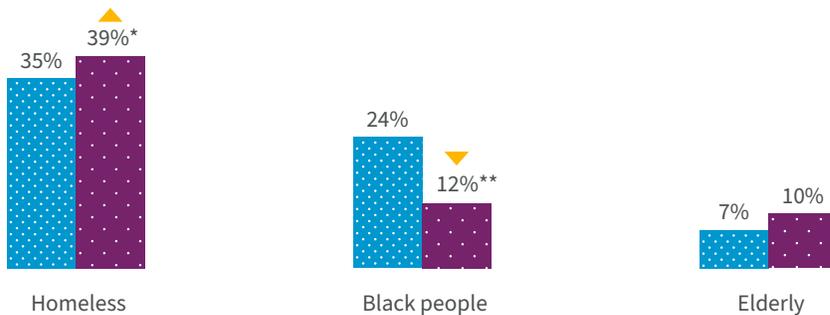
Mentions of Black/African American people as those who have been “left out” decreased by January 2021 but are still one of the top categories of people identified, right after the homeless.

When identifying who has been “left out” and is not being taken care of, Black/African American people are the second most mentioned category across both timepoints. There were fewer mentions of Black/African American people in January 2021 (12%) than in June 2020 (24%)—

and mostly from children who live near summer protest areas. Mentions of Black people included things like Black/African American people being left out due to unfair treatment by others, including police.

TOP 3 CATEGORIES

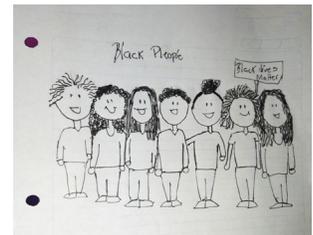
■ Jun 2020
 ■ Jan 2021



* Most frequently mentioned among children of Liberal parents

** Most frequently mentioned by those who lived near summer protests in June 2020

▲ Statistically significance difference between June 2020 and Jan 2021



“ I think that the homeless and the animals that have no home are the ones that are neglected... many people treat them badly without knowing what they went through to get to that state but still they need everyone’s help to make sure they don’t have such a bad time and now because of everything that is happening with the pandemic I feel that they are much more vulnerable.

BOY, 7, WHITE, JAN 2021



“ Black people are being excluded and are those who are not being cared for or helped because many have died. Because others look at their skin color and that is unfair and not right and that is why they are being excluded. We are all equal and we all deserve to be treated well.

BOY, 7, WHITE, JUNE 2020

“ ...African Americans are being left out because we’re being beaten badly and we’re dying, and the laws aren’t protecting us...we must do something to stop it from happening... And if they don’t accept us, then we’ll just have to go with it because no matter how kind we try to be, they’re still going to try to beat us up and try to kill us.

BOY, 8, BLACK/AA, JAN 2021

Parent-Child Conversations About Racism

Children’s more nuanced understanding about racism, combined with it appearing to be less of a front-and-center concern for some of them, may reflect distance from the summer protests and support from parents in building their knowledge about racism.

The majority of parents reported first talking to their child about race or racism before the summer protests, and most had done so by the time their child was age eight.

The majority of parents have talked to their child about race or racism, with most (83%) having had these conversations *before* the race-related events of summer 2020. Additionally, most parents (96%) had talked to their child for the first time about race/racism by the time their child was eight years old. More Black/African

American parents (98%) had these conversations with their children compared to White parents (75%); conversations about race/racism were also more prevalent among those who lived near summer protests (95%) areas compared to those who did not (75%).

RACE/RACISM RELATED-DISCUSSION

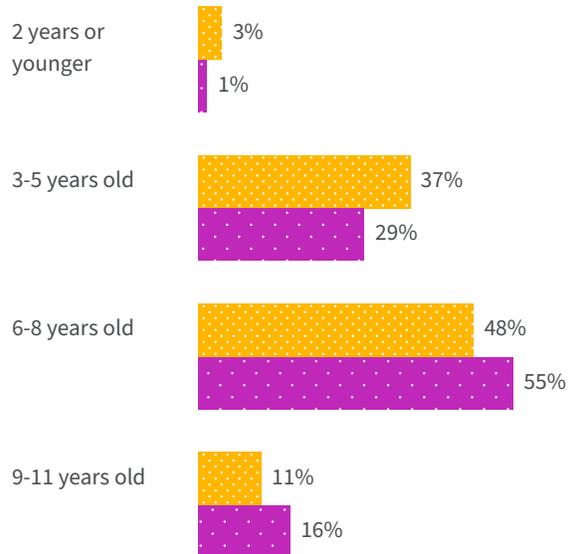
■ Race ■ Racism



More Black parents and those who live near protests are having these conversations

HOW OLD WAS YOUR CHILD THE FIRST TIME YOU TALKED TO THEM ABOUT RACE/RACISM?*

■ Race ■ Racism



* Asked to those who answered yes to have you talked to your child about race/racism

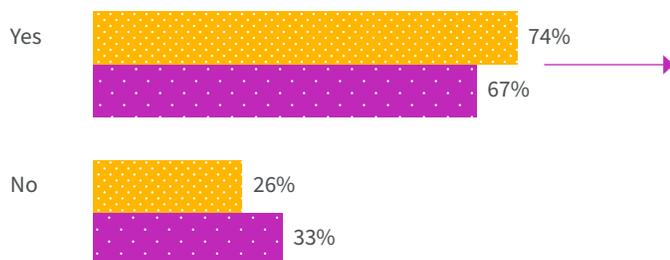
In January 2021, the majority of parents were still talking to their child about race or racism, and about half were discussing this more often or about the same amount as last summer.

Parents were having conversations about race or racism before the summer 2020 events, and they were still talking about these issues by January 2021—especially parents of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) children (86%)

compared to White children (60%). Families are mixed on how they have been talking about race/racism since last summer, with some talking more often, some less often, and some about the same.

IN THE PAST MONTH, HAVE YOU BEEN TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT RACE/RACISM?

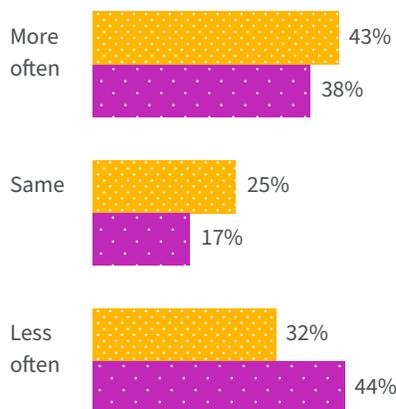
Race
 Racism



Significantly more parents of BIPOC children are talking to their children about race and racism than parents of White children

IN THE PAST MONTH, HAVE YOU BEEN TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT RACE/RACISM MORE OR LESS OFTEN THAN LAST SUMMER?*

Race
 Racism



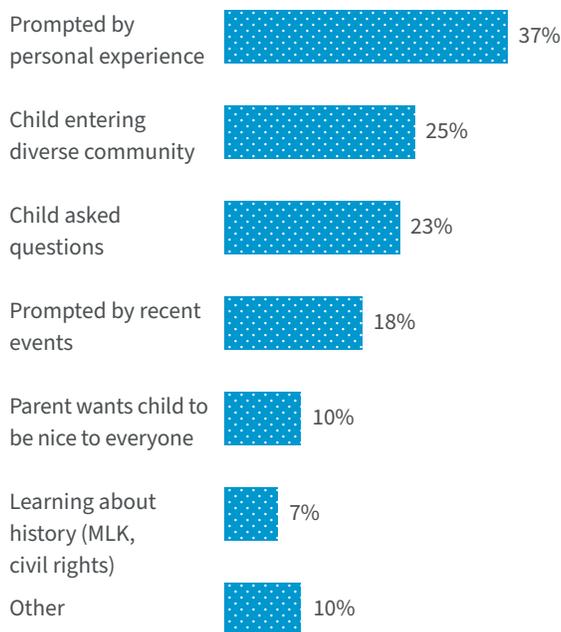
* Only answered by those who said yes to in the past month, have you been talking to your child about race/racism?

While initial conversations about race/racism were prompted more by personal and new diverse experiences, recent conversations in January 2021 were prompted more by media and sensing an increasing importance of these topics.

When parents were asked what prompted their first conversations about race or racism with their children, they responded to this *open-ended question* with mentions of personal experiences with race or racism for them and/or their children, preparing their children for entering diverse communities (e.g., moving to a new neighborhood or a different school), or children asking questions about what they have seen or heard.

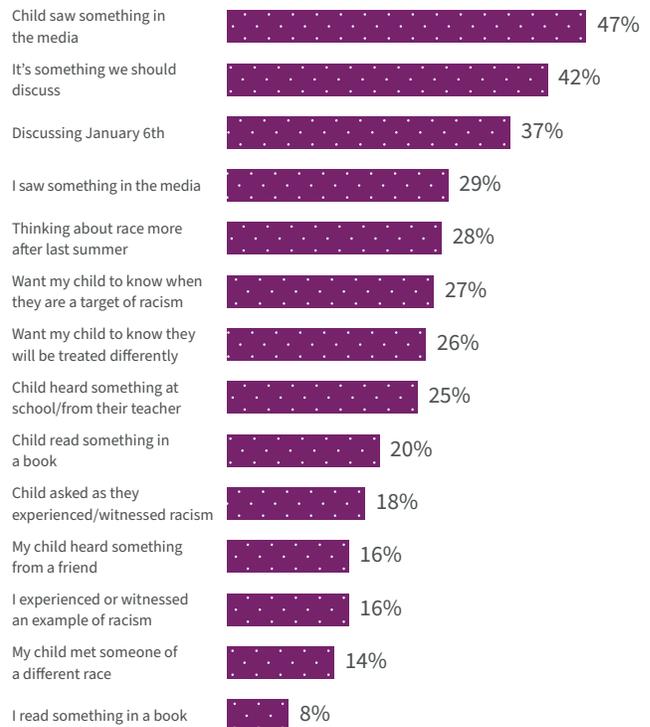
When asked in January 2021 about what prompted recent conversations about race or racism with their children, parents selected current events in the media or feeling that it was “something we should discuss” (*closed-ended question* with multiple options selected).

JUNE 2020: WHAT PROMPTED THESE INITIAL CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT RACE/RACISM?



Note: This was an **open-ended** question. Text responses were manually categorized.

JAN 2021: IN THE LAST MONTH, WHAT BROUGHT ABOUT THESE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE/RACISM?

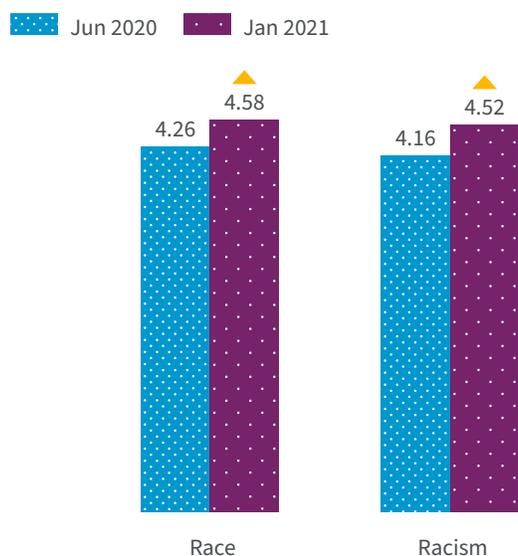


Note: This was a **closed-ended** question for which parents checked multiple options that applied.

Parents reported feeling even more comfortable and prepared to discuss race and racism with their children in January 2021.

This shift may be due to a widening presence of discussions about racism across various forums (e.g., social media, friend circles, media) as well as the continued conversations parents are having about race/racism since the summer protests.

ON A SCALE OF 1-5, HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT...



ON A SCALE OF 1-5, HOW PREPARED DO YOU FEEL TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT...



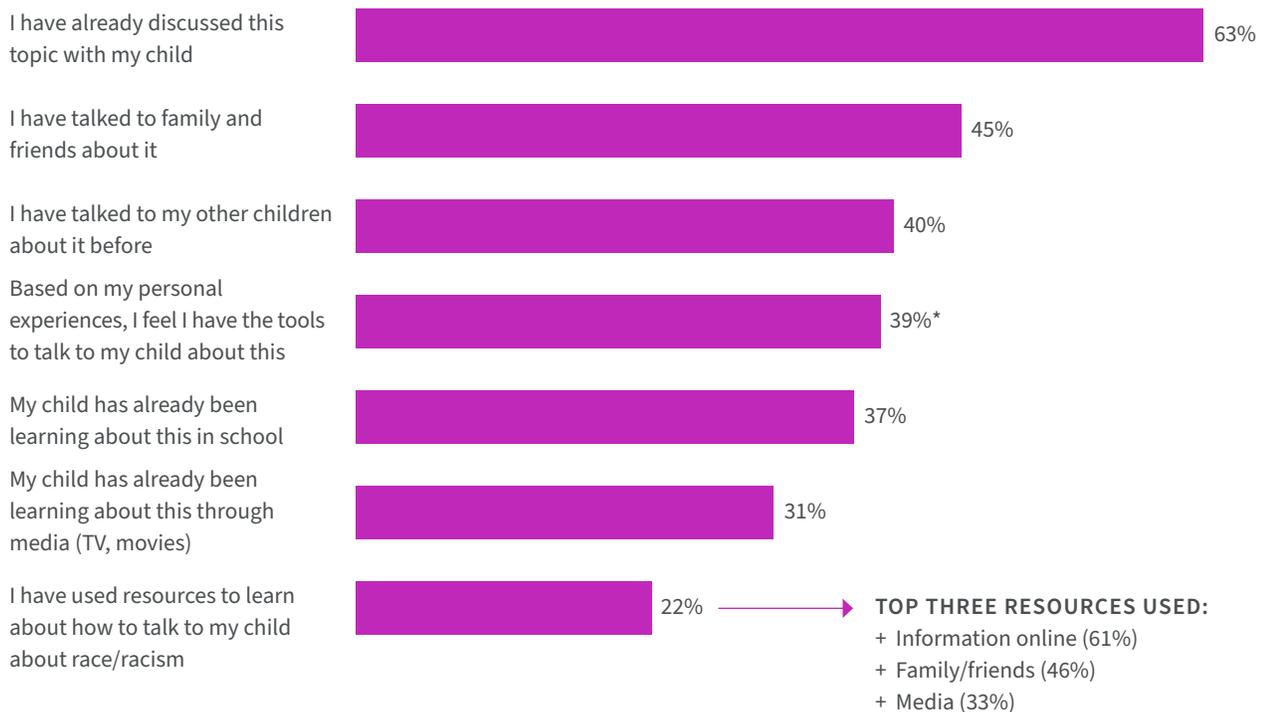
▲ Statistically significance difference between June 2020 and Jan 2021

Parents report feeling comfortable and prepared to talk to their children about race/racism due to prior experience discussing these topics with their children, family, and friends.

Parents report feeling even more comfortable and prepared to discuss race or racism with their children in January 2021 than in June 2020. They note that various factors have bolstered their ability to feel comfortable and prepared, including previous discussions with children,

family, and friends. Notably, about one third (37%) also mention that their children are learning about race/racism from other sources, including school and media. About one fifth (22%) mention resources that have supported these conversations.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAS MADE YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE AND/OR PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT RACE OR RACISM WITH YOUR CHILD?



*Parents of Black/AA children more than parents of White children

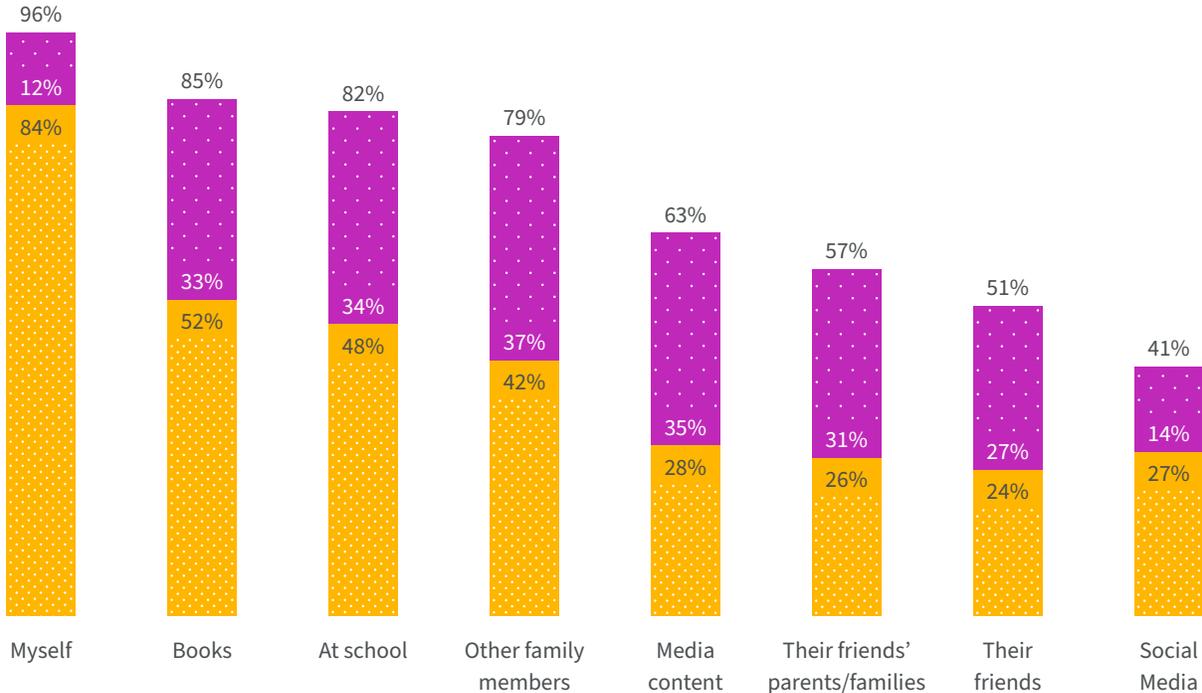
Parents prefer to be the ones to teach their children about race or racism, followed by books, teachers, and other family members.

Parents overwhelmingly want to be the ones to teach their children about race or racism. In addition, the majority feel at least somewhat comfortable with their children learning about this topic through other sources, including

books, school, other family members, and media content. Social media appears to be the source with which parents are least comfortable, yet still almost half (41%) report feeling at least somewhat comfortable with it.

HOW COMFORTABLE WOULD YOU BE WITH YOUR CHILD LEARNING ABOUT RACE/RACISM THROUGH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?

Extremely comfortable Somewhat comfortable



Supporting Families Along a Changing Journey

With the passage of time from the protests and racist violence that took place in June 2020, children are processing racism somewhat differently than they were several months ago, although some are still very much thinking about it with fear and frustration. The distance of time from the most heightened period of media-covered racial violence and protests has allowed them more space and opportunity to think critically and deeply about racism; they have also been able to find some hope amidst what they witnessed over the summer.

Parents reported that they are engaging with these sometimes-difficult conversations about racism with more confidence and comfort in January 2021 than they had in June 2020. But they have consistently reported that, while they want to be the ones teaching their children about racism, they are also open to their children learning more about race and racism from sources, such as books or videos. With education about racism becoming more a part of the ether and parents' confidence growing, now is the perfect time to provide them with tools that can support them in this effort.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

There is a large body of existing research on children and the development of racial bias; we also know that children's sense of identity develops at an early age. How can we translate this knowledge to help parents, educators, media developers, and policymakers support children who are grappling with racial/ethnic differences and systemic inequities?

- + Parents feel that it is important now, more than ever, to address issues of race and racism with their children, and they seek trusted resources for information to further boost their own confidence in leading these conversations with their children.
- + In the months since the summer 2020 protests, efforts have been made to support families and educators with resources and information about race and racism. But in order to create change for the future, there must be a sustained commitment to raising awareness of racial justice issues; this is the case even when there are no immediate news stories about acts of violence bringing these issues to the foreground.

- + In today's always-connected world, children are exposed to a variety of messages about race and racism. Parents and educators can help children by having conversations about what they are seeing—both at the height of media coverage and when these stories are less prominent in the news cycle.
- + Media developers may find opportunities to provide, for children and their families, age-appropriate content that enables discussion of what they are seeing. Children need positive depictions of diverse characters addressing and celebrating differences. This representativeness provides a base that can be leveraged into media representations of characters working toward resolving potentially difficult situations, modeling allyship, and becoming upstanders.

Findings from this study are informing the development of content for Sesame Workshop's *Coming Together* initiative: media, books, school curricula, and particularly an educational framework for children ages six-to-eight that is currently in development. Content can be found at SesameWorkshop.org/ComingTogether.

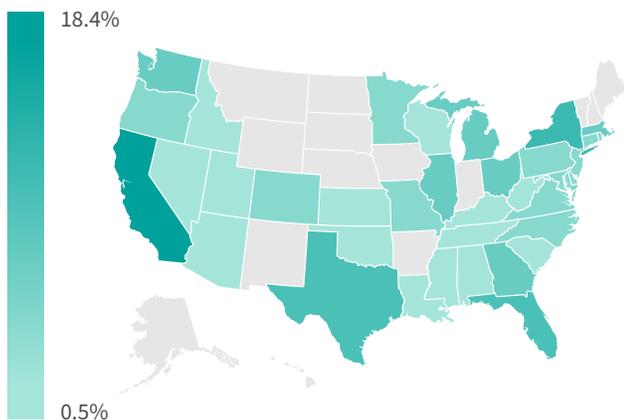
Sesame Workshop has always been committed to helping children develop a healthy sense of positive social identity and embrace differences with curiosity, kindness, and respect. We continue to strive to provide tools that will equip parents and educators to help their children work through difficult conversations.

Study Methodology

This study was conducted by Sesame Workshop. In June 2020, in response to the surge in media coverage of race-related violence and protests, Sesame Workshop launched a study to understand how racism and the summer protests were affecting children. The study was done in two waves.

Wave 1 was collected in June 2020 with 207 families, and Wave 2 was collected in January 2021 with 147 of the same families who participated in June 2020. This study design was informed by previous Sesame Workshop studies conducted from 2000 through 2002, in response to the Columbine shootings and 9/11, which revealed how children experienced crises in different ways at different times.

The data were collected with children ages six-to-eleven representing a mix of income, political leanings, and race/ethnicity from 35 states. Families also represented a mix of urbanicity.



All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). All differences reported between subgroups of the US population are at the 95% level of statistical significance, meaning that there is only a 5% (or less) probability that the observed differences could be attributed to chance variation in sampling.

Child Diary Questions

Child diary questions were answered in two waves in June 2020 and January 2021.

In both Waves 1 and 2, children answered five general open-ended questions about their hopes, fears, and the world around them. The children were asked what they wish for themselves and the world, their worries and fears, their heroes, what superpower they would want, and who is left out in the world. These questions were hosted on an online platform that allowed children to answer using drawings, photos, writing, and videos. The diary questions intentionally did not mention racism or protests; this was so that we could learn how salient and top-of-mind these issues were for children.

Survey Questions

After completing the diary questions, parents and children answered several questions specifically about race, racism, and BLM protests or the Capitol riots (January 2021 only). Questions were asked about police encounters, discussions of race/racism, beliefs and attitudes about race/racism, experiences with discrimination, and

current events. The survey included a mix of closed and open-ended questions. Analyses of the questions included basic demographics and frequencies. To test for differences between groups (i.e., income, race/ethnicity, age, political leanings), t-tests and ANOVAs were conducted. Additionally, to test for significant differences between waves, paired sample t-tests were used.

Diary and Open-Ended Analyses

All diary questions and survey open-ended questions were then manually coded based on categories generated from researcher reviews of responses. To ensure consistency in coding, multiple researchers independently coded 25% of the data selected randomly. The Krippendorff's alpha test was used (Hayes and Krippendorff

2007) to estimate the inter-rater reliability in all variables. Inter-rater reliability across all wave variables ranges from 0.744 to 1.00 for all coders, indicating acceptable or strong reliability between coders. The quantitative data presented are results of this manual coding process.

Once coded, analyses were run on diary questions and survey open-ended questions including frequencies, paired sample t-tests, independent t-tests, and ANOVAs. All differences reported between subgroups are at the 95% level of statistical significance.

For more information, please email web.press@sesame.org.

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Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit media and educational organization behind Sesame Street, the pioneering television show that has been reaching and teaching children since 1969. Today, Sesame Workshop is an innovative force for change, with a mission to help kids everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. We're present in more than 150 countries, serving vulnerable children through a wide range of media, formal education, and philanthropically funded social impact programs, each grounded in rigorous research and tailored to the needs and cultures of the communities we serve. For more information, please visit sesameworkshop.org.



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