

SURJ Mother's Day Action Toolkit



Below you will find an action toolkit created by SURJ (and friends) to help you plan your action on Mother's Day. As we watch the protests in Baltimore, we are reminded of that so many Black mothers mourn the deaths of their children to police brutality. Please share the Mother's Day Action Toolkit with other families and parents. Thanks for being brave, bold and supportive. Let us know if you have any feedback, comments or questions at info@showingupforracialjustice.org.

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Issue at Hand

"We must acknowledge — with eyes and minds wide open — the world as it is if we want to change it." -Charles Blow, New York Times

White parents and families can shape and shift the way children think and talk about race—by explicitly talking about race and injustice with them. The goal of these conversations is to prepare young people to understand racism, and work toward racial justice. For white parents, it's a great opportunity to build these conversations into everyday life.

What Can We Do

As white people showing up for racial justice, join us in engaging white children in our goal of fairness and equality. We want dignity and justice for all people in the U.S. In just the past few weeks, Freddie Gray, Mya Hall (both in Baltimore) and Rekia Boyd (in Chicago) were killed by the police. Let us remember their names and take action in their honor to guarantee that this doesn't happen to any other children and adults from our communities.

Check out our action items that come in various shapes and sizes designed for your lifestyles. Pick an action or two or more that feels doable make sense to you to do.

Get Informed

Read up on how children learn about race and discuss it with friends, family, and organizations. Check out these helpful outlines and fact sheets:

[Children Are Not Colorblind: How Young Children Learn Race](#) by Erin N. Winkler, Ph.D.

[Excerpt from Nurture Shock](#) by Po Bronson and Ashley Merriman

[Raising Race Conscious Children, a blog for parents](#)

[7 Things To Do When Your Kid points out Someone's Difference](#) by Rachel Garlinghouse

[Parenting and Baltimore: Where to Begin](#)

[How I would talk to my future four year old about Michael Brown and Eric Garner](#)

2 MINUTE ACTION: In just one click you can spread the word

Sample Tweets:

“Color-blind”=racial inequity. Be race conscious! www.raceconscious.org #MothersDay #parenting #BlackLivesMatter #BaltimoreUprising #Showup4RJ

#Every28hours there's another #FreddieGray #BlackLivesMatter @Showup4RJ #MothersDay #ParentsforRJ

30 MINUTE ACTION: Sit down and read with your child.

For any parent or family members who wants to begin talking about race with children of any age (including babies!):

Read the book "[More, More, More, Said the Baby](#)" by Vera B. Williams to your child. For more information about reading this book with your child, [please visit here](#).

As you read, stop and notice race out loud. For example, you might say:

- "Look, this baby has peachy skin that people call White."
- "This baby has brown skin that people call Black."
- "I noticed that the grandma has peachy skin and her grandbaby has brown skin."

With a child who is talking (two-years or older), you might ask: "What color is your/my skin?" and think about how to describe your own skin colors.

You also might read "[The Colors of Us](#)" by Karen Katz to further describe your skin colors, and even do an art project together around your skin colors, as the character does in this book.

For parents or family members who are already talking about race with their children:

Read the book "[The Other Side](#)" by Jacqueline Woodson. As you read, or after reading this book, you may ask the following questions:

- Why do you think Mama said, "Don't climb over that fence when you play"? (Explain what segregation means and give the historical context for this book.)
- The girl on the fence wanted to play with the girls, but Sandra said no without even asking the opinion of the other girls. Why do you think Sandra said no? What would you have done if you were Sandra? Why?
- Why do you think Jacqueline Woodson wrote this story?
- How would this story have been different (or the same) if it took place here in New York City in the present day?

As a follow-up, you might encourage your child to learn more about present-day and historical segregation by interviewing a family member, neighbor, or friend, or even doing a google search for census data on present-day segregation. [Click here to learn more about how to support your children to identify, explore, and take action on race-related issues.](#)

For parents who have children in middle school and high school this is a perfect time to have conversations with them about what is happening in Baltimore and around the country with police violence and Black men in particular being killed. What are they hearing at school? Do they know the facts? How do they feel about what is happening? How is it impacting or not impacting their classmates? Ask them if there is one thing that they want to do to make a stand for what they think is right.

1 HOUR ACTION: Write a letter to the editor or a blogpost

Letter to the Editor (LTE) : Write an letter about why police brutality is an important issue for you and your family and what needs to change. Post it on our [Facebook page](#).

[Click here for tips on writing an LTE.](#)

Here are some writing prompts:

- As a white person, this case matters to me because...
- I am speaking up and raising my voice to say enough is enough because...
- Freddie Gray, Rekia Boyd and Mia Hall would still be alive today if...
- I support #BaltimoreUprising protesters because...

1 HOUR + ACTION: Organize a Mother's Day Action at your home or a local bookstore

- Read one of the above books as a community of parents and children. Raise awareness that mothers of Black teenagers are losing their children to police violence in Baltimore and everywhere.
- Partner with a bookstore and ask them to stock copies of "More, More, More, Said the Baby," "The Other Side," and "The Colors of Us" and make them available along with copies of this toolkit.

1 HOUR + ACTION: Organize a Mother's Day House Party

Invite friends, family, and members of your community over to your house for a dialogue on the #BaltimoreUprising. Choose an article or video to discuss or talk about how racism is impacts your community. Ask people who attend to donate to the [Legal/Bail Fund for Baltimore](#).

For tips on holding a house party, see these great resources from our affiliate groups:

[House Party Kit](#)--Kentuckians for the Commonwealth

[Living Room Conversations](#)--Rural Organizing Project

[Building a Movement through Monthly Dialogues](#)--Alliance of White Anti-Racists Everywhere-Los Angeles (AWARE-LA)

Additional Resources:

Blogs/ Writing/ Books:

[Raising Race Conscious Children](#)- new blog focused on bringing race into families. A few great posts from the blog including [Why I talk about race when I read to my Toddler](#) and [Supporting Children to Take Action](#)

[Parenting for Collective Liberation](#)- includes great posts like - 5 Things to Know about Talking to Children about Race and some others

[Teaching for Change](#) - The best selection of children's books on racism and other topics

[Skipping Stones](#), An International Multicultural magazine

[Rethinking Schools Magazine](#)- emphasizes problems facing urban schools, particularly issues of race.

[That's Not Fair!](#) by Ann Pelo and Fran Davidson- A guide for activism projects with young children

[Open Minds to Equality](#)- by Nancy Schneidewind- A source book of tools of learning activities for Equity

[Boys Will Be Men: Raising Our Sons for Courage, Caring and Community](#), by Paul Kivel-guide for parents who are raising sons

[Helping Teens Stop Violence, Build Community and Stand for Justice](#) by Allan Creighton and Paul Kivel- prepares adults for working with young people by providing a theoretical framework for violence prevention work along with exercises in being effective allies to youth.

[Putting the Movement Back into Civil Rights Teaching](#), by Deborah Menkart- a teaching resource book that emphasizes the power of people through a diversity of stories, essays, photographs, and interactive and interdisciplinary lessons.

[Everyday Acts against Racism: Raising Children in a Multiracial World](#) by Maureen Reddy- A book of essays by mothers and teachers that examines the effects of racism on our children and communities

Teaching Resources:

[Sparks: The Anti-Bias Curriculum](#) by Louise Derman- Tools for becoming an anti-bias teacher

[Beyond Heroes and Holidays](#) by Enid Lee, et al.- A k-12 guide to anti-racist multicultural education

[Teaching about 1963 in 2013: Civil Rights Movement History Resources](#)

[Teach About Selma](#)

[The New Press Guide to Multicultural Resources for Young Readers](#)- by Dapne Muse

[The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism](#) by Debra van Ausdale

Organizations:

[Million Moms March](#)

Contact: rebefred14@gmail.com 502.802.6794. RSVP here: [Million Moms March](#)

[Border Crossers](#), a racial justice organization for teachers

[Facing Today](#), a project of Facing History

[Teaching Tolerance](#), a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center

[Rethinking Schools](#), an organization dedicated to helping to shape reform throughout the public school system in the U.S.

[Zinn Education Project](#), promotes and supports the teaching of people's history in middle and high school classrooms across the U.S.

[Family Diversity Projects](#), organization dedicated to educating people of all ages about diversity.

[Syracuse Cultural Workers](#), publisher of social justice materials.

[Northern Sun](#), publisher of social justice products and materials.

About SURJ

Mission

SURJ is a national network of groups and individuals organizing white people for racial justice. Through community organizing, mobilizing, and education, SURJ moves white people to act as part of a multi-racial majority for justice with passion and accountability. We work to connect people across the country while supporting and collaborating with local and national

racial justice organizing efforts. SURJ provides a space to build relationships, skills, and political analysis to act for change.

For more information please visit our website: <http://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/>

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