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## TALKING RACE WITH CHILDREN

Speakers: **Dr. Kang Lee**, *Professor & Tier 1 Canada Research Chair, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto*

**Dr. Sharon Smile**, *Psychotherapist*

**Dr. Vidya Shah**, *Associate Professor, Leadership and Education, Faculty of Education, York University*

Moderator: **Michelle Munroe**, *Coordinator Family Engagement, TDSB*  
**Wednesday, June 26, 2020 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

Good evening, everyone.

Welcome we're just giving a couple more minutes. We'll be starting in about 2 minutes, so just please hang in. Enjoy the music, get yourself settled and we will be starting shortly.

You will note that as you're entering we have a poll up. We just ask that you complete that poll while we give it just a few more minutes. Thank you.

All right Margaret, I think we could get started perform thank you.

Margaret: Okay then. I will be your technical assistant today. This session is being recorded and will be available on the website. To ensure a smooth session for all attendees we have enabled both the Q and A and the chat function, mute the all participants and presented and screen sharing. If you want to open the Q and A or the chat function simply click on that icon. We request that both spaces be used in a way that creates a safe and a respectable environment for all to engage.

If you are calling into the session please use star 9, the raise hand function and the moderator will try to get to your question. Next step is audio and microphone. The audio quality of this session is based on your individual band width.

If you're worried about slow internet connection you can call in by using the dial in information included in the invite. The invite is located at [www dot TDSB.on.ca](http://www.tdsb.on.ca) under the heading Latest News. If

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for some reason your speakers' band width becomes unstable and speaker become choppy, please bear with us. You may exit or change the full screen speaker or gallery view by clicking the top right button. Lastly there will be a quick survey and a poll for you to complete before leaving the webinar. I've put the link to the polls in the chat. Now, to get things started, I'm going to hand it over to D. Williams your co-chair for the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee more commonly known as PIAC. Over to you D.

D.: Hi there, welcome. So I'd just like to welcome everyone to this session. And just start off with the TDSB land acknowledgment.

We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

So is Associate Director Colleen Russell-Rawlins on the line yet? Perfect. That is like the perfect timing. So I'd just like to first of all introduce Colleen Russell-Rawlins Associate Director of Equity, Well-Being and School Improvement at TDSB.

Colleen: Thank you very much, D. and thank you for being the chair of PIAC and working with us to offer this exciting program to parents and caregivers this evening. Thank you to everyone who has joined us. June 24 is the second in a series of conversations that will impact your child's well-being. Tonight's dialogue, with our esteemed panel, focuses on talking about race with children. What an important topic in this moment and in fact, has always been an important topic for parents to speak about with their children.

We know children learn to detect racial difference about 6 months old. Once as a classroom teacher I recognized that in our kindergarten classrooms. I think we have to be honest about the internalized bias that our children have. For many Black and other equity seeking groups of people, these conversations about race happen early and often. For others, it may be in response to something that happened at school or in the community. What we know now and what is so clear to us given what is happening in the world around us is that if we want our children to live in a socially just world we must be proactive in talking with them and educating them about race and racism in all its forms including anti-black racism and anti-Indigenous racism and anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination. So, I'm very grateful to the panel this evening for facilitating this conversation. I know it will be a challenging conversation, but an insightful conversation. I would like to now turn it over to Trustee Rachel Chernos-Lin who serves as liaison to PIAC.

Thank you very much. Over to you Trustee Chernos-Lin.

Trustee Chernos-Lin: Thank you very much Associate Director for that introduction.

So, as mentioned, my name is Rachel Chernos-Lin and I'm the Trustee for Ward 11. Tonight, I'm pleased to introduce the third and final webinar that we will be hosting this week. All of the topics for these webinars have been chosen based on direct feedback from parents and guardians. Tonight's topic is certainly one that many parents have been requesting especially in light of recent events in North America. Equity well-being and student success are all important pieces of our multi-year strategic plan here at the TDSB. We know we cannot achieve these goals without significant work around anti-oppression training and without transforming the nature of the education system. This includes things like de-streaming and much more. As a school board, it is important that we listen to

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our community. It helps us make informed decisions and it also helps us to provide support and guidance where needed. And through the equity task force undertaken a couple years ago, we learned a tremendous amount from our TDSB community about what needed to change. Ideas of that been brought up again loud and clear in the last month. And so tonight we look forward to an engaging evening where we hope to address parent concerns related to talking to their children about race. It is my absolute pleasure to introduce this evening's co-moderators Michelle Munroe with the TDSB for the past 15 years. She has worked in the field of public education and public service for over 20 years delivering anti-oppressive, anti-bias and anti-Black family community and engagement. In her role with the parent and community engagement office, Michelle works closely with families and so I have the wonderful luck to work closely with her as the Trustee appointed for the last couple of years and know we are in good hands tonight. Michelle is also the mother of 2 girls and resides in the GTA.

And Floydeen Charles, Floydeen is a founding member of TAIBU community Health Centre. A few weeks ago Toronto public health declared anti-black racism -- making this happen advocating in this regard for quite some time and appearing before the Toronto public board of health in the fall of 2019 to depute on this very issue. In doing a bit of research I also learned that Floydeen was the first Black woman to earn a black belt in Florida and eventually went onto become state champion in the sport. Needless to say we are in great hands tonight with our 2 moderators, over to you Michelle and Floydeen.

Michelle: Thank you, Trustee. Good evening everyone I'm going to turn the floor over first to Floydeen.

Floydeen: Good evening everyone. How are you? Can you hear me?

Michelle: Yes, but we can barely see you. We're seeing the top of your head.

Floydeen: Oh. Can you see me now?

Michelle: Of your camera, please.

Floydeen: Pardon me?

Michelle: Just a slight adjustment of your camera and then we're good to go.

Floydeen: I'm on my phone so I don't know how to -- hold on. Let me see how I can

Michelle: What we'll do is hear you -- there you go. Perfect. Thank you.

Floydeen: Can you see me now? Okay.

Michelle: Yes.

Floydeen: I am going to start by reading a statement of truth just give me -- I'm not so good at this.

Michelle: We're all in the learning journey of the technology, Floydeen.

[Laughter]. Floydeen: Geez, sorry. I don't know how to switch between my screen and -- okay. So this just an introduction, a statement of truth and it speaks the truth to [indiscernible] experiences. It was significant presence and contributions on this land predate the country of Canada by over 150 years.

Indeed up until 1961, over half of Black people in Canada [inaudible] Indigenous to Canada.

Indigenous settlers to Canada includes ancestors learn of that. Our sweat, skills, experiences and contributions taken and used without consent, and for free built and shaped early Canada learn of that. For example, Viola Desmond has undoubtedly pushed -- until the powerful promise it is today

learn of that. People of African dissent are resilient, brave, spiritual and master builders who have been centralized to the campaign for equality, equity and equitable Canada. The new goal is African Canadian truth telling starting today. Learn of this. I just wanted to take this opportunity before we go in [inaudible].

In light of what has happened today in terms of the results that we -- are experiencing from the days of Devonte Miller that while we speak and the world is now responding to the experiences of anti-black racism in the recent part this has been our ongoing lived experience.

It has been an experience as we talk about race and racism and that when we speak with our children about race and racism to understand that the lived and living experience of people of African dissent has been ongoing since time and memorial and in this country. So I believe as we have this conversation today and we talk about how we talk to children about race it's important for them to also understand that in this country that racism has manifested itself, has been an experience here even before Canada became a country, and what that means to us now. I think the fundamental difference is the unrelenting trauma and experiences of trauma that we are experiencing that in conversations with our children that we speak to them in the way in which they understand it, and learn it and how at an early age it can be taught how to even mitigate in their own environment around their peers.

So I also want to take this opportunity to thank you all for allowing me to be part of conversation, a very necessary one, and one that I hope will take us to another level of dialogue and action. Thank you very much.

Michelle: Thank you, Floydeen. So as we now prep for this dialogue I want to just quickly -- would you go to the next slide, please.

Just do an emotional weather forecast which is an opportunity where I ask you to check in where you are, what you're thinking, how you're doing and pay attention to the space that you're in and how you're feeling and just a gentle reminder, next slide

that usually when we're entering spaces we're in a very comfortable place we're in our comfort zones, we're feeling good but I want us to keep in mind that while our comfort zone is a comfortable place, very little grows there. Sometimes in order for us to stretch our thinking we need to open ourselves up to the possibility and the possibility requires us to step out of that comfort zone and that space. In order to do that, next slide Latha sometimes we need to sit in places of discomfort. I ask if there are places of discomfort if there's something that you see that is said that somehow your body begins to do a little shift and you're feeling a little something I ask that you just stay in it for a moment. You do some self reflection, ask yourself what is it that I'm feeling, what is it that's making me curious, what is it that making me feel uncomfortable. And I ask you to sit in that discomfort. If we're able to pay attention to it, talk ourselves through it our body will eventually adjust to it. The feeling will pass and then we'll get to the, next slide

which will take us to what I call that aha moment which is an opportunity for learning and an opportunity for growth. And we want that growth to happen this evening for our conversation. And so I ask you to just sit in that place. I also ask as we have this conversation that the chat is open to you and we want to see you use the chat but we want to ensure that you're using the chat in a safe way. The guideline for the chat is, do no harm this evening, right. We want it to be a safe place where you

can express yourself or others can express and all thoughts can be shared. So without further ado, let us get to the purpose for this evening.

We have some -- oh, thank you, Latha, go ahead with that. I don't want to miss that. So this evening these are some of the terms and definitions that you're going to be hearing as we move throughout the evening.

What I want you to do is, anyone online if you know what either of these words mean, I want to you get to your chat and I want you to start sharing definitions with each other. I'm going to give them to you and I thought you know what let us start working with each other, sharing with each other provide us content information that we need so that we can start the chat in an informative way. So take a look at those terms. If you know what it means, start chatting it, all right. Now, we move to our esteemed panelists that we have this evening and looking forward to a great talk.

Keep that slide Latha and move to Dr. Kang Lee. He's the professor in tier 1 Canada research chair. Dr. Kang Lee with the University of Toronto he's also senior scientist, professor rank department of psychology with the University of California, Chicago California, San Diego I'm sorry.

He has mainly focused on 2 areas in terms of his research the first is a development of -- face processing for over 2 decades -- versus other faces of other race faces and the link.

Currently, Dr. Lee's lab is exploring how to reduce racial biases in childhood. Without further ado, Dr. Lee, we'll turn it over to you. Could we get your microphone on? Dr. Lang --

Dr. Lee.

Dr. Lee: Yes, let me share the screen. Okay. Let me see. Can you see my screen?

Michelle: Yes, we can.

Dr. Lee: Okay. Thank you so much for the introduction and thanks for inviting me to this evening to talk about racial biases and how we can combat that. So I want to give you a little bit of history account of psychological research for racial biases and how to reduce them. So let me see -- I'm sorry. Okay. And then the first book is by Gordon Allport in the early 1950s. He summarized about 20 years of work before him. And if you read this book, you will find out what exists then mostly in the United States and Canada and continues to exist today. So, nothing really has changed. And, his discoveries and others discoveries made then about the development of racial bias and racial bias amongst adults and continues today. The only scientific development over the last 70 or something years is this, this is the book if you want to take a look to buy it, it would be really a good book to read it's called blind spot by 2 researchers one is Tony GreenWald and Banaji from Harvard University. They discovered a new a kind of biases knotted to the biases that -- so what are these biases? So basically the --

there are 2 kinds of biases now we know. One is called the explicit racial bias. It has 3 components one is stereotypes, basically some kind of general generalized views we have about certain race. For example, when I was in the United States my colleagues always assumed I was good at math. They say Asians are good at math. A, overgeneralized notion about the race. Next one is prejudice, the negative attitudes against certain kind of racial groups. And the third one discrimination, that is the way -- actions you have taken to do something based upon race. For example, you criminalize certain racial groups more than the other groups. There are many, many kinds of these examples and we have seen lately. So this is just the tip of the iceberg, however. So what the new discoveries

in psychological science is this:

The implicit bias. These are the biases that we have but we are not aware of. These cluster I don't types, prejudices and discriminations. All these biases explicit or implicit actually would have negative impact [indiscernible] human life including politics law, employment, health, education science and [inaudible]. So I'm not going to spend time talking about this negative impact that they would have on racialized groups in Canada or United States. I just want to give you one example that you may not be aware of. So in the United States there's a strong scientific evidence to show that medical doctors when they particularly white medical doctors when they prescribe pain-killers to their patients, they tend to give less pain-killers to Black people, Black patients because they assumed they can't tolerate pain more than white people. And a friend of mine at the University of Virginia did a study with five year old white children. And, they already had the same view as the white doctors. So this is just very, very small example of how some of the biases that we have implicit or explicit or the impact on our everyday lives and things that you may be aware of and things you are not aware of at all.

Okay so the next thing I want to do is I want to show you a picture. So in this picture this is the picture actually used in racial bias training classes in the U.S. police departments. So I want you -- you don't have to tell me how you respond to this, but you tell yourself what is your very first reaction to the picture I'm going to show you? Like what is the story here in the first second, okay, are you ready? Okay. Let me show you next one, okay. So what is your first gut reaction to this picture? So I'm going to tell you how in the United States, most of the police officers response are. Regardless if they are black, white Hispanic these are police officers, of course this is a police officer arresting a black criminal.

Okay. But this is -- this picture can be easily the other way around that is this white guy is holding up this Black innocent person on the street.

So the white person is actually a robber and the black person is a victim. However, where you show these pictures to people on the street or in the police department that was not their reaction. Their first gut reaction is that white person is arresting the black person. So what is this? This is the bias? So it could be explicit bias could be implicit bias, okay inspect any way so let me -- so if you want to test whether or not you have implicit biases, you should go to this website called the Harvard university project implicit. So this is a great website. You actually can find out a lot about yourself, your biases without -- by going through the test. So they actually looked at also biases you have, about skin tone biases, gender biases and your biases against the transgender individuals, your biases against religion age and racial biases of course. And it's really, really a very good website for you as adults as parents to find out whether or not you already have certain kind of bias in particular racial biases, okay.

It will be -- make yourself aware of the biases that you have that you actually did not know before today. Okay. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to just answer a bunch of questions based on what I know about the existing scientific evidence. So I'm going to answer this question as I'm asking them, so the first question is: At which age do children begin to show explicit racial biases? So the answer is about 3 years of age. So at 3 years of age children actually show very strong racial biases

in favour of own race against other races that's number one.

And at which age do children begin to show implicit racial biases? And the work from the lab showed children as young about 9 to 10-month of age already show implicit racial bias. You'll be very surprised so the extensive research showed parents actually place -- play very limited role in the formation of children's implicit and explicit racial biases.

Children racial bias are highly unlikely coming from parental explicit teaching to them. So in some communities possibly in the United States you may have these parents who are very explicit racial bias and then teaching their kids against other race individual but this is very, very rare. Majority of the time parents actually do not parents racial biases are not very highly [indiscernible].

And then next question is, do children's cognitive development play any role? That is their development intellectual abilities, the ability to control self-control or things like that. It turns out these factors actually play important role in children's development of racial biases. And also more development actually is a very important protective factor for children to develop explicit racial bias against other race individuals. And the last question is: Are there any effective methods to reduce racial biases? So you'll be very surprised. Research on this has been ongoing for over 70 years. Almost no method is going -- is going to have a lasting effects. Most of the methods are useless. And there are few methods useful and we still don't know quite well how long these methods will last. The longest lasting effect that a method has produced is about 40 some days, okay. Just keep that in mind. So you can ask me questions afterwards why I'm saying what I'm saying. So let me give you a few examples.

This is -- you see -- how do you know babies are racially biased? This is a study I'm going to show you a bunch of studies I did actually in China. The reason I did the studies in China for 2 reasons there's rampant racism in China and -- so that's for one reason. Another reason is, in China the majority of the kids in China would have no exposure to other -- that creates a very nice research environment for us to isolate experience -- experiencing children's formation of racial biases. So in this particular case I'm going to show to you is we showed children music and all these faces this is happy music all these faces and sad music all these faces or happy music other race faces or sad music other race faces and we then look at how children learn to associate between the music and face. Turned out children just very readily associated other race faces with happy music and other races with sad music. And on top of that we also taught children to follow the gaze of own race or other race individuals to talk about things in the world. And we discovered that babies about 10-month of age would like to learn from own race individuals. They don't like to learn from other race individuals. Here's another one we did with about 4, 5 years old. In this particular study you can see this on your left-hand side is typical Chinese face and on your right-hand side is a typical African face but then what we did was we put the face together to create that hybrid face 50% Chinese, 50% African. But then we put a little bit of smile to the face that's top face and little bit of anger to the bottom face then we showed this to Chinese 4 and 5 years olds.

And to our surprise, Chinese 4 and 5-year olds believed that the person who's smiling is Chinese and the person who's angry in the middle and angry face is black. So this finding has been replicated many places with adults as well. So adults when they look at ambiguous race faces if the person's angry they think it's black but if the person smiling they think it's their own race. This is place on

implicit explicit racial bias -- so then you would ask the kids are so young how -- where do they get this kind of ideas and turns out one of the fundamental idea they got from is not from their parents but from their environment. Because when babes are born they are born into an environment that they see mostly their own race faces. And because of this and then they gradually develop positive associations with own race individuals and -- with other race individuals. Some may say babes 9 and 10-month olds already showing racial bias we must be born with anti-Black biases or anti-Chinese biases or anti-white biases. The answer actually is no. We studied the newborns as soon as they born there's no racial biases at all.

By about -- for the last 3 months they start to prefer to look at own race versus and then by about 9-month of age they can only recognize --

>> As if they all look the same. They maintain ability to -- really limit so as a consequence then babies start to show these biases at the very young age. Now, so so we have developed some methods just like the Harvard project to test children's implicit and explicit racial biases. I'm going to talk about how exactly it's done. Now, we have methods you can use to test implicit and explicit racial biases of your kids as young as 3 years of age.

I do want to show you. So this is implicit racial bias test.

You can ask me later how we do it. You should try the Harvard website. We basically molded off their methods. I want to show you something that is a totally next one explicit racial bias measure. So this is a typical explicit racial bias measure children as young as 3 years of age. This summer your mother will take you to a swimming class. In the class, you can choose one person teach you how to swim, whom would you like to choose? And a majority of the kids will just pick their own race individuals.

So that is a Chinese face. They wouldn't pick the African looking person as their coach.

And this seemed to be applied to many, many situation teacher who you want to choose as teacher, as a doctor, etc., etc. So the children as young as 3 years of age have very strong bias to say pick someone they're familiar with mostly people from their own race even though these individuals are someone they are not familiar with. Just keeping that in mind as well. Okay. So this is then you ask what about Canada, are Canadians kids less racially biased well the answer probably is not. You can see -- these are the Canadian children from about 3 years age to about 12 years of age. So there's a very strong bias against Blacks but the strongest one is among white kids and Asian kids also show strong anti-Black biases and south Asian and mixed race children and students under 12 years of age also have strong -- against Black people in Canada. This is in Toronto.

We collect data this Toronto.

We can see that the white children Asian children and south Asian mix the race children tend to have strong anti-Black biases. This is young as 3 years of age. So the bias is very strong at a very young age. So the question is how can we deal with this? So we discover -- so the people tried various methods to counter these biases. So let me give you one example because this is a work done by professor from [indiscernible] university. She spent her whole life doing this.

What she discovered was in Quebec when you give children books to read children only pick books with own race individuals on the cover. So then she would teach children to -- to try this other -- these books with other race individuals. And then even children learned they actually enjoy the

stories and that was very good and then the bias will be gone in the next few days, but a few weeks later when she came back to the preschool classrooms the children's bias would return. So she tried all sorts of ways throughout her entire career nothing lasted.

So said this is not good we have to start early and we should do something different. So one of the things that we have done is actually to teaching children to recognize other race individuals. So we don't tell them about race we teach them ask them to basically learn the names of different -- other race individuals. So we ask them to recognize for example the Black individuals by their names and then we give them test until they remember these five people's names very, very well and then test their implicit racial bias and to our surprise which is in about -- after 20 minutes of teaching learn about five Black faces the Chinese in this case the Chinese children racial bias dropped down significantly, but then about a week later their racial bias came back. This is implicit racial bias. They say okay let me give you one more 20-minute training remember these 5 Black faces and once you do that you can see right away their racial biases reduced today zero implicit racial bias reduced to 0. Then we say how long will this last. We wait for about another 30 something days so in total about 47 days we give them another test. The implicit racial bias against Blacks actually comes back but do not come back to the level about 47 days ago. So seemed to us teaching children to learn about other race individuals and their names not only helped children to remember people's faces, but also have the benefit reduce somewhat their implicit racial biases. And another method that people are used and we are using as well is actually brings other race individual to come to face-to-face interaction with children. And turns out this really has immediate impact on children's biases against this individual. This Chinese girl immediately had developed very positive feelings about this other race adult. And also they reduced implicit racial bias and implicit racial bias right away.

However -- and then you wait for a few month or later you come back. All that positive feelings as well as the biases the original bias will come back. So there's direct interpersonal interaction seems to be working immediately but do not -- just does not last for some reason. So we don't know why. People spend millions and millions of dollars on this in the United States and sometimes they create camps for mix the race camps in the United States every single summer for the last 20 something years now an none of these camps actually produce lasting racial bias reduction effects, okay. So another one that has been shown to be quite effective is this, this is actually very important one and so this is basically it's called the counter stereotype examples.

The idea is sometimes you in your exposure to your environment to give you a sense certain race individuals are good at doing a thing and certain race individual are good at doing certain other things.

However, if you give children exposure to people for example you know when I say nurse immediately in your head you say female there are many male nurses as well. If I show you more male nurses able to counter your story I don't type and therefore reduce your implicit and explicit racial biases and in this case they'll be talking about positive examples like James is a firefighter, or James is a doctor or James a police officer, James is a scientist.

By learning many, many examples of a typical stereotype or counter stereotype example would it reduce children's implicit and explicit racial biases but we still don't know how long this kind of effect will last.

One study we've done recently is telling us this would last at least 90 days. We haven't got anything beyond 90 days.

Finally this is something I really want to do I would like to collaborate with TDSB is this, we discovered if we can use the 10, 15 minutes physical activity time to teach children how to be active but same time we can reduce their racial biases. This experiment with it in China as well. We asked children to follow these other race individuals when they are performing various physical activities and the children have to mimic what they do and they have to learn who they are. And by doing so the children learned who they are, they can recognize their faces, they know what they had developed positive feelings towards them they also learned to do various physical activities exercises and on top of that their racial bias against Black people in China with these other preschoolers reduces significantly both in terms of implicit and explicit racial biases. So I think this method probably to me I'm very hopeful that I can try it out in Canada or in different parts of world to see whether or not this method can work in many parts of the countries as well as whether or not this train effect can last more than 90 days. Thank you very much.

Michelle: Thank you. I'm not sure about anyone else on the line but I have so many questions for you Dr. Lee.

Dr. Lee: Sure.

Michelle: But I'm going through so many questions but this is why I really wanted to invite you when I started to take a look at your research I was quite intrigued in terms of what your findings were and started exploring your site and thought it would be fascinating to have our [inaudible] across the district hear what you have to say and share with us what your findings were in your research. So Floydeen we're going to move directly to our next speaker, Floydeen, did you want to introduce Dr. Smile? Is she still with us?

Floydeen: I am still with you I can introduce myself.

>> No, we will not, no.

>> It makes it shorter.

>> I will introduce you. No.

>> [Laughter].

>> For you those on the phone I'd like -- it is a privilege for me to introduce to you Dr. Sharon Smile a development pediatrician. Dr. Smile's research is identifying new model of care to address feeding challenges [inaudible] autism spectrum and also got some incredible insights and perspectives into the conversation around racial --

>> [Multiple speakers].

Dr. Smile: Welcome, I'm sorry. It took me a while to get off mute.

>> Thank you so much.

Dr. Smile: And thank you so much for the invitation. I had slides but I'm getting old but I cannot save them over something else.

So I apologize. So I'll use my voice instead as a vehicle to have that conversation. I just want to say I was really impressed with Dr. Lee's work and I learned a lot from his presentation. And I'm going to shift a bit regarding the conversation piece. I'm going to give you the lived experience and what my

experience is in clinics speaking to families with kids who may have a disability, I'm a developmental pediatrician as I said before so I work a lot with families with kids who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders but also from racialized groups and bringing the perspective as a physician. So when we look at racism in itself and having those discussions with clients within the hospital because one thing that I start out by saying to many families is that it's a biologically meaningless term, right. Because, from a genetic perspective, we're probably 99.9% similar. And so race is as defined previously by Dr. Lee and others a social construct.

It was something that was created to oppress -- for one social class to oppress another social class. So we may look differently but from a genetic perspective we're very much same. And when we look at racism in itself it does impact health. And this is very important for parents because along that childhood life-span from infancy all the way up to adulthood the impact of racism is very real. And it's identified as what's called as socially transmitted disease by the American Academy of Pediatrics because of its impact on health. We know that it's one of the social determinants of health which is similar to poverty, housing, immigration, childhood health, equity, insecurity, so it's something that we should as physicians have these daily or these conversations with families when they come in. And when we are talking about racism and I speak to families I'm not only speaking to families who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour, I'm speaking to everyone because we're all part of construct, right, and interconnected. And I think for Dr. Lee when he went through some of the strategies that we use or that's used to figure out how we slay this beast of racism, we recognize that probably some strategies last for a short period of time but not having these long-term effects and it's because we're all in this together, right.

Not coining the term for COVID-19 but truly as a human race we're all interconnected and so it will take all of us to address this issue. But for my -- we know that racism creeps up or manifests even from [indiscernible] care where we have health disparities or birth disparities in adults -- having premature births or higher infant mortality rates. So it's starting from early, right. And then we also see the impact of racism on mental health especially among certain kids with anxiety, poor self-esteem that starts from early childhood and creeps up into adolescents and depression as well as just there is who do I talk to right feeling alone, feeling isolated and these can be manifested in many different ways. When I look at racism in itself as well as health, I look at it from early childhood. We look at our own systems here in Canada.

Where we have 40% of our persons who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour represent kids who are in our CAS system, right. They're removed from their homes. Whether or not it's protective or unprotective environment, but that separation in itself tells us that something is happening. We also look at kids who drop out of school, right. Where we have kids who are persons of colour 2 times more to not likely not to complete high school. Why is this? When you go deeper, you find that racism is a factor the language and vocabulary that we use and stereo types that we place on kids will impact on their academic journey and education success. And this is important.

If you're finishing high school especially studies coming out of the States, persons with a college degree are more likely to live longer, have better lives and less chronic illnesses. So, if that's the case, if we have many of our kids who are Black, Indigenous or people of colour not completing

school not having a degree and more likely to be using our health care system often. And probably as well, lack of access to proper health care system is even going to make them more disadvantaged. Now, for me again in speaking to families, I look at explaining racism, how do I talk to my child about racism because that's the topic of today's discussion. And there is no one solution, there's no one way. And because racism, as Dr. Lee says, while it changes across the life-span, right, we know that kids within that first year, they're able to identify different colour hues. So they can recognize what's similar, what's different. So as a developmental pediatrician I tend to look at -- use a developmental lens across the life-span to figure out how do I open this discussion. I tell parents the discussion has to start from -- you have to prepare yourself as well prior to having that child, how am I going to commit to an environment which is supportive, positive, has positive vocabulary, empowerment because I know that when that child is in the environment there are many factors that I can't control. So it is effect trying to protect but also to prepare.

So I look at if I look at kids and I'm speaking now to families with kids who are in these preschool years, I look at the type of development where are they at, how would they understand race and racism and we know that for kids who are one to two years of age, they're starting to be aware of themselves, they're starting to interact with others within their own social or cultural root system right, they see their parents, they look similar and depending on what they're eating, what they're wearing, holidays they're enjoying they start taking on that type of identification. And curious about physical characteristics, so they want to look at hair differences, colour of the skin, clothing that you're wearing, gender and so they're trying to match people based on physical characteristics. So as such when I'm looking at strategies to start that conversation about race, I'll say, let's start ensuring that there's access to other persons of different ethnicity, right. Which means that you don't just have friends who are Black, right. You don't just have friends who are of the same ethnic group. It's fun you could go to -- if you go to church let's say, if we look at our church system here as well.

If I go to and try not to stereotype there's going to be a significant group of ethnic group that's similar. So I'll challenge the parent to say hey, do something different where you'll be exposing your child to another person of a different ethnic origin so that they see that there's another possibility. And use that in your library, have a home library, bring books in that have different ethnic groups as well so that you're starting that preparation as well as that awareness early on. Now, I speak to my families with kids who are 3 to 4 years of age that's a very dangerous age group. Why? Because these are like that preschool year right. And at that stage kids recognize differences and similarities so they know differences, I am darker, that person is lighter or that person looks very much like what I see on TV, Disney dolls, right, Disney queens. That princess, that's what I look like and that's what I'll represent. So because kids at that age understand physical characteristics sometimes they're not really sure why that child is darker colour or why that child is lighter colour.

This gives us the opportunity to start those discussions and start using positive vocabulary or words so that that child with -- having conversations with others as they get older.

Please note that media, media, media, is very, very important.

Impress upon our kids, right a lot of different messages that you may not even be aware of.

So is that implicit bias, right.

So they're getting all these cartoon characteristics or movies that a positive image is only made with a person who is Caucasian and negative images the bad guy is always Black, the Black guy gets killed off first in a horror movie. So those types of messages are starting to be embedded in kids. And so it is important for families to be aware of what are your -- what is your child watching, right, what message is being delivered and this is where you start either reprogramming or avoiding those types of exposures or having a discussion and saying, hmm, that's not right. This Disney princess could be Black or she could be Brown whatever or Indigenous. And start having those conversations from early because the world is already imprinting that on your child's brain. So it's important to know that.

When we look at kids who are going into grade 1, so looking at our 6-year olds, they're really smart because now they understand their internalizing this idea of superiority or oppression because they've been living through this, right, whether or not they have this immediate interaction and intimate interaction of either being oppressed or seeing that they're favoured because they're picking it up in JK already or SK. So by the time grade 1, they recognize that power difference.

And they also tend to feel they explore their own self as well as group identity and so you may see them having friends that are similar to them, right. So they feel safer in that type of group. This is where we start hearing a change in language where name calling, right, using that stereo typical language is going to be more prominent and may have conflict in that group where they feel secure in saying it because everyone else is saying it. It's also important to know that, again, they recognize similarities as well as differences. So when you have 6-year old or grade 1SK kid, again, talking about similarities and differences and not making differences being something negative. When we always talk about differences it seems like less than or negative but a difference can be just another way of seeing things or another way of doing something.

And so accepting another way is important. I am originally from Jamaica so I used to watch television and thought Christmas was Santa Claus with a fireplace and snow falling and it was fabulous and we could have hot tea or hot chocolate. Then I came to Canada that's not Christmas, no, Christmas is trying to get a plane out of here to Jamaica, right. So that's my own bias, right. And again, where did I learn this?

Where did I learn this? I learned this from watching television, seeing it being displayed as this lovely experience which it is for the most part but there is another option, right or another way of looking at it. And it's having these discussions with your kids saying that different does not equal bad, but different equal a different -- another option.

Right. And then if you start challenging these definitions or words that we use and try to figure out what's driving that behaviour, then when you're having the talk it's not something that happens at teenage or adolescent. The talk happens from your child is looking at you, right. So we're talking about preschool years.

Then we go to the tricky grade 2 going up to when you're age 9, what would be different about these kids? They can have a lot of critical thinking. Right.

So they're stopping and trying to figure out hmm, what's happening, why is Johnny being treated different, or Michael being treated different from Susan. Why is it and they're picking up the colour of

their skin, their accent, where they're from, the way they dress drives that differential type of presentation or treatment. So being disadvantaged is if you look like Johnny you're less likely to get your teacher giving you stars versus not. So that understanding happens.

9 years of age is a very tricky year because research has shown that kid's racial identity and attitudes are quite fixed at age 9 and tend to follow into adolescent unless they're experiencing some significant life-changing experience those attitudes tend to follow them into adolescent. So if at age 9 kids are already rigid in the way that they're thinking about stereo types, that means that we have to start before that. Right.

So that is in our experiences those lived experiences, teachable moments, having that dialogue and vocabulary that is open, positive and ascribing positivity to your own ethnic group as well as others. Then we go to the older kids. Which is the kind of tricky kids these preschoolers, pre-adolescent, sorry. Always mixing them up.

What's different with pre-adolescent. They're like your justice Warriors, right. This is where they're evolved. They see injustice, this is wrong mom, no this is wrong we have to change it. They don't see the limitation that the world puts on them, right because they think they can change that. They'll change climate, change they'll have positivity through politics, through laws and this is amazing but we also have to protect them, right because not everyone will be on that bandwagon. But here kids are very concerned about injustices and looking for an outlet in which to express how can they change their environment.

Also entrust in history and geography at this time. So they're going to do their own research, social media is available to them. Their libraries are available to them and they're going to try figure out why this is wrong right. So as a parent, you have to be open for that discussion. And so it's important especially in these pre-adolescent age groups they're very, very good at picking up when they're adults or when the did you mean to say are authoritative figure is not being fair. Right. So this is where we're going to have these arguments at school with the teacher, right. Who is talking but not walking or with you as a parent who's talking but not walking the talk of equity diversity and -- this is where we have that adolescent timing with that parent, be prepared for that. And because it will be a discussion that you should -- you will have it's important that you arm yourself with information. And then for the last group adolescent into adulthood, remember development is dynamic, it's never-ending.

And so with each lived experiences, one then tries to figure out why is this happening okay I did very well but it happens again okay I'm following all the rules but it happens again I didn't do anything wrong mom but he looked at me, it happened again. So it's again trying to equip your child with strategies in which to deal with life experiences where there's no rhyme or reason where they may be victims of racism but they may also be perpetrators or may be absorbers, right. So we have to prepare them with strategies in which to apply whenever they fall into either of those categories. For me, when I speak to parents to have a conversation or their talk I say to them first you have to do only introspection. Don't have that blind spot where you think everyone has a bias except me and doing that implicit bias testing through Harvard is really an important one it could be eye opening and anyone can do it as Dr. Lee spoke earlier.



Stop and be ready for that discussion. It's going to be painful, you're going to cry, you're going to go I don't know what to say but remember this discussion is ongoing, right and also a journey that you take along with your child, right.

And be open.

Michelle: I'm going to ask you if you could hold it there.

Dr. Smile: Okay. Sorry I can I keep talking a lot.

Michelle: You're going to have an opportunity at the end of the conversation.

Dr. Smile: Okay, brilliant.

Michelle: We hope we'll be able to do that during the Q and A. What we wanted to do now Dr. Shah if you could just hang with us we just want to do a quick musical break so people will have the opportunity to get up and stretch and then we're just going to do a couple seconds and then you'll be immediately on next, all right. People get up and stretch, do what you need to do and we'll be back in about 3 minutes.

>> ♪ ♪

Michelle: Thank you. I hope you had an opportunity everyone to just get up and stretch a bit. We just know that some of these Zoom chats sometimes you're sitting for a while. So we hope you got a moment to stand up stretch a bit. And why don't we -- Latha would you take your slide out so Dr. Shah can get setup, did you want to take the intro.

Latha: Sure I'm fine with doing that and thank you to the speakers I too have questions Michelle. So Dr. Vidya Shah is an assistant professor at York University. And I know she's going to also have some very informative things to say. So welcome Dr. Shah.

Dr. Shah: Thank you so much for that introduction. Thank you for the invitation to be here today Dr. Lee and Dr. Smile it's to great being in conversation with you and learning from you. I was just thinking as you were both speaking that I think how we set up this evening is actually quite, quite lovely.

So Michelle thank you to you for your leadership on this. I want to begin by saying I am a teacher, a former teacher in the TDSB, very proud I'm currently a teacher educator at York University, so I work with practicing teachers. And I talk a lot about race. I talk a lot about race in the various classes that I teach both undergraduate and graduate. And you know, I think it's important for me to also begin by saying that to sort of position myself in these discussions. So I identify as brown or -- Asian. [Indiscernible]. All ancestors from India. And second generation. I am -- I'm also what I identify as a South Asian woman living on Turtle island.

And I say that because I think it important to locate where we are and what this means. And I think about you know my family's histories of colonization in various ways the intergenerational trauma that we are still working through as a family. The ways in which the internalized messaging that Dr. Smile was talking about and Dr. Lee was talking about lives on in us. And I'm also very conscious of the fact that I'm on this land as a set letter on this land and I think about what that means about my responsibility to this land, what that means in terms of my responsibility to standing in solidarity with Indigenous communities here, standing in solidarity around water land protection movements standing -- recognizing my responsibilities as a treaty person on this land.

So much of that informs how I think about conversations around race. And sort of makes that distinction between racism and Decolonization which are 2 separate pieces although interconnected. I share with you today as well as and I want to thank you for nameg --

Miller. You know, we are in a time of global uprising, global racial uprising in a way that I don't know that we've seen before. And there's a tremendous amount of sadness and grief. This is a tremendous amount of pain and trauma. And there's a tremendous amount of something is emerging, something is emerging in us as a collective to speak up and stand back and challenge and disrupt racism. And you know, this notion of -- this problem of anti-racism is something down south, south of the border that we don't have it here today's verdict around the case of Devonte Miller is perfect example of the fact that we in Canada here in Toronto we are seeing much greater state sanctioned violence against Black and Indigenous communities. [Indiscernible]

wrote an article a couple of days ago saying that in the last couple of months 6 Indigenous people have been killed at the hands of police. And so we are -- this is us. This is us in Toronto and in Canada. And we need to start from that basis. Start from the basis that we have a legacy of cultural genocide, there's continued genocide on this land.

We have a legacy of anti-Black racism that exists in every single institution that we operate in from policing to health care, as Dr. Smile was sharing to education. And I'm seeing quite a few comments on the chat box about that. And the ways in which it plays out in education. So today I'm speaking to this notion of you know, speaking to Brown parents about talking to your kids about race. And I want to -- I position myself because to me identity is so important. Race and racism -- racism what it does to our students, what it does to us as human beings is dehumanizes us and so the purpose of conversations like today is to think about what would education systems look like what would our homes look like, what would our society look like if every child, every person was affirmed, felt safe, had their rights met, what would our society look like then? So this conversation about speaking to our kids about race and racism is actually a conversation about human sayings and liberation, what does it mean to create systems in which we can all come into our own all be humanized that's what this conversation is about. As a Brown person or south Asian person I recognize how complex identity is and how I [indiscernible] in the world and how I'm complicit meaning that I participate in anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism and uphold white supremacy. Today's conversation is going to be about that and uncomfortable, I'm glad that Michelle shared at the beginning the slide what we do -- I'm going to say some things today that might be uncomfortable for to us hear and you might disagree with it and I encourage that discussion and discourse because this is what today is all about. So just jumping in very briefly when I say brown, you know in the U.S. when they say brown or even here in Toronto when some folks say brown they're referring to [indiscernible] today I'm specifically to people of the south Asian [indiscernible] so we might be talking about countries like India and Pakistan, we're talking about countries in the Caribbean, we're talking about countries in Africa, Europe in which the south Asian -- exists. And I want to also say that if you are on this call and you don't identify as Brown, I want to you hear and think about the ways in what I'm sharing here actually talks about racial hierarches and how racial positioning influences who we are, how where read what our options are in the world ways in which we are dehumanized or humanized. The

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reason I use the term Brown this comes from a webinar I did last Friday with [indiscernible] in Dubai and we talked about Brown complies city. What ways are Brown folks -- in upholding anti-black racism. This notion of Brown speaks to the fact who by census -- many second, third, fourth generation folks here by census definitions would be considered south Asian would not identify as south Asian would identify as Brown. So Brown to me is a political term, a contested term, it's a term that is used by particular people in particular ways. And so any of these terms any of these categories are categories that are created for particular reasons for political reasons, at political times -- I'm sorry attic times and are contested terms that we need to always be thinking about. Right. I also want to say that [inaudible]

people there is a lot of diversity. We are diverse in terms of our religion, diverse in terms of geo-political connections we are diverse in terms of place of birth, language, in terms of social class in terms of cast in terms of so many differences, right.

This is a -- it's a very like any racial group a very dynamic, very complex grouping. And I say that because you know, when we think about the experiences for some of the children in school that would identify as Brown, while it's hard to kind of group those experiences into one, there are some patterns that we are noticing, right. There's some patterns that I notice growing up, patterns that I notice in the students that I teach. There are patterns. I think what's important is that, you know, a common experience of many sort of southeast Asian, east Asian students in schools is one of invisibility. We are largely invisible in school textbooks, invisible in the media, many institutions. And, while that might be changing we don't have many representations that is we can look to. I think about, you know, there's the [indiscernible] show that came out never have I ever and I think about how many Brown women my age were tweeting about how important the show was to them because we never had that representation growing up ever.

It has lots of complexities and critiquing around it. And I agree with many of those critiques but the poll to be represented in the media and to have your stories or even a version of your stories represented on screen meant so much. And we can't underestimate the importance of that. And so this idea of being invisible often living between 2 worlds. Always the video growing up that was at school and the video that lived at home and how those 2 people had to negotiate. One space maybe not Brown enough and one space maybe a little too Brown and having to negotiate how to switch identities between home and school. I think about the fact that you know, so many of our -- of Brown children I think about the way that the media positions us as Brown folks and Dr. Smile spoke to this but we're often envisioned as this perpetual foreigner. We're never actually Canadian, we're always different, always positioned in some sort of comical sense. Combined with that accent, is this comical person. Many times we are raceless, so we just don't talk about race at all if we are positioned on screen. Then the stores sort of rags to riches, you know, you have folks that are sort of living out the Canadian dream or whatever it might be and this all links to the idea of the model minority.

This idea that it was actually -- it's actually -- it's a myth first of all. I need to say that. But the model minority myth was created in the '60s and '70s and actually created to take attention away from the enslavement of Black people and replace it with this notion of look at this group over here that's

working really hard and making it. It must not be systemic racism that's the issue it must be something inherently wrong with Black folks if they're not able to do the same thing that Brown folks are able to do. This myth of being the [inaudible] needs to be a minority, this came into play specifically to justify further enslavement and dehumanization. [Inaudible] specifically in our curriculum [inaudible]. If you don't understand how these -- how the system of white supremacy works to create these myths that we are inevitably going to be [inaudible] in it but the fact that we don't know about it [inaudible]. Not supposed to know about it because then we might actually resist it. This notion [inaudible]. I owe so much of my right to be here my family's right to be here in Canada, [inaudible] we think about for example in Canada we have of the Ontario racial discrimination, the employment equity act, these are all -- these are all acts that occurred in the '50s, '60s, '70s and spearheaded by the activism of Black folks. So very actually me, my family and folks that look like me owe our right to be here to Black activists and that needs to be said very clearly. This model minority myth what it does to us [indiscernible] [inaudible] it lumps us all into one category.

I struggled with math but that's a separate talk. But what it does is lumps us all into this one category and it's dangerous, it dangerous because it does not account for the religious socio political -- among south Asian or population that is require further help or support we are often denied that. We are not -- we are invisible [inaudible]. Assumes [inaudible]. The reality is -- that is not true. And the reality is there are many glass ceilings that we're working with. And the reality is when we look at [indiscernible] last week who stood up in the House of Commons and called out the MP for being racist and refused to withdraw that comment got kicked out of the House of Commons. If we're talking about the federal -- party is not allowed to say that without their being repercussions -- -- there are limits and we need to recognize that we need to recognize that our job is to help -- and our place in it. [Inaudible].

It's this idea that more positive qualities are associated with lighter skin, beauty, social capitals, social wealth, social mobility is always associated with lighter skin. Most recently there's been this big movement to change the leading -- the leading bleaching cream in India and actually in the -- that's called fair and -- there's a big movement because it's considered anti-Black to rebrand it. What they're rebranding is there's something wrong with darker skin what associated with darker skin is lower social mobility is -- is, you know, not being beautiful, that's what's associated with blackness so instead of just stopping the production of the cream they're now rebranding it. This is deeply seeped into many, many people of colour and how we think about ourselves in terms of our aligning to whiteness physically. Right. We think about this in terms of how we tell our children who they can be friends with, who they can date, who they can partner with, right. It shows up in that way it shows up where we choose to live. We want to live in the better neighbors, the safer neighborhoods and that's code for white neighborhoods. So we need to be honest about that and say this is in fact what's happening. It shows up as well in the ways in which we justify the mistreatment of Black and Indigenous people in Canada.

Instead of recognizing the state sanctioned violence that is directed at Black and Indigenous folks you'll hear many Brown people not all not me not many members of my family but some Brown

people you'll hear they deserve it, it's part of their culture. If they just didn't -- if they just complied with the laws, this wouldn't happen. If they just, you know, cared more about schooling, they wouldn't get kicked out of school. These are the kinds of things that are said among many Brown people, Brown families and this is what this does is it instead of understanding the sociopolitical and economic construct that is gives rise to differences in access and opportunity disproportionate outcomes for families and students and -- so a lot of this comes down to what, you know -- a lot of Brown folks that are making money off of the cultural appropriation of Black culture and that's -- it's just not okay, right. We think about the lack of knowledge here or the in action, the fact that for - - we can turn away, the privilege to turn away and not have to think about race and talk about race is indicative of the fact that we have aligned ourselves with whiteness, right that we have aligned ourselves with this idea that we are Ben factors of not having to talk about race. So I share this -- I share this last slide here. When we think about speaking to our kids about race and what that means. Dr. Smile spoke about this so clearly and in such an important way that representation matters in media in books it matters. It matters that we see ourselves represented positively, I want to give a shout out to a different book list which is a wonderful bookstore that sells books that represent a variety of identities and complex identifies. Representation matters. So buying books, exposing our children to different people, especially people that are challenging the model minority myth especially people that are not falling in line with what it means to be quote unquote Brown in society, people that are exploring different jobs, different experiences in life representation matters. This notion of validation of complex lived experiences talking with your children, recognizing that they are navigating multiple worlds recognizing that it's really hard to think about who am I at school and who am I at home and why are those 2 different people what about me is allowed to come alive at school and home and what space can actually hold both of those things, right. So thinking about the complexities, thinking about the complexities and intersections in terms of gender identity, sexuality, social class in terms of language having these conversations with our kids it also means educating ourselves really for us to learn alongside our children, alongside of children we don't have to be the experts, as the adults we can be -- we can work alongside our children and learn together. And this is where it's important I'm a very proud auntie, I don't have children but a very proud auntie. We're talking families learning together not just parents and children we're talking grandmas and grandpas and neighbours and building what we call a critical consciousness being able to read the world to be able to have direct conversations with our kids about race there's often the misnomer if I don't talk to my kids about race they're not going to grow up racist that is the exact opposite of how things are playing out right. We want to engage them in conversations at an early age as both Dr. Lee and Dr. Smile mentioned. So normalize difference that it's not you know to be aware of when we're associating particular differences with negative connotations, uncivilized when are we associating particular differences with positive qualities and breaking that, working through that with our children? And this is a really important piece especially as folks that are sort of like the people of colour group -- [indiscernible] the people of colour group to think about our complies city in this, to think about the fact that if we're choosing not to speak about why dark skin is considered ugly in south Asian communities that that's actually anti-Blackness right. If we aren't having these conversations in our families [indiscernible].

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Finally, just to share the importance of speaking with your children about how to see the world how to see who might not belong who might not -- who might be excluded who might not be safe who might feel uncomfortable and why. So to develop the lens to see that and then to develop the skills to intervene to ask a question, to redirect, to call it straight out and say this -- I don't agree with this because this sounds racist to me, to model that behaviour with our children so that they see what that looks like for them to see us doing it with neighbors, family members, co-workers because they are watching, they are watching everything you do and so this really at the end of the day is about how do we come home to ourselves as humans, as people that are all looking towards liberation and humanity and what that means in terms of what our role is as collective, thank you.

Michelle: Wow thank you so much Dr. Shah. I'm now looking at the time, it's 8:06. I'm going to take moderator liberties right now and ask the audience if you could hang in there with us for five more minutes drop me a couple yeses, we're doing okay in the chat so I know you can stay with me just for a few more minutes because there are a couple of questions that came through that I want to pose to the panelists. Okay great I'm seeing some yeses. So that's fabulous. So, the first one is going to Dr. Lee. Dr. Leea, one of the questions asked in the chat was, do families with mixed -- do mixed families have the same issues, questions, concerns? Did you find out anything in your research?

Dr. Lee: Yes, very limited research about this however evidence suggests if you are exposed early on to diverse environments including mixed race families, you tend to have much reduced racial biases not only against these 2 groups fathers raise mothers raise but also beyond that. So the early diversity seemed to be very, very important to children and the language is also important. If you hear many, many languages not also allow you to learn – so, that I think creating a diverse environment in your family and your immediate environment or schools ought to make the child less biased in many ways.

Michelle: Thank you for that. The next question. Dr. Smile there are a couple who wanted to have you please provide your examples as to how do you talk to teens about race?

Dr. Smile: Yeah. They're a difficult group but because of --

Michelle: No, teenagers, no.

Dr. Smile: Can you hear me?

Michelle: Yeah

Dr. Smile: Yeah, okay. Because of their cognitive skills, they have a lot of reasoning skills and I tell parents this is where you have real talk, right. Not trying to hide, not trying to cover things up, they have -- they're wiser than you think and lived experiences where they may not have divulged to you and I always ask parents to reflect back. Give an example of your own life where you were impacted by racism or that was part of your journey. And dissect it with your child right and have that discussion. I am a strong believer of starting with family. It's surprising to me when we look amongst our population that another ethnic group can just relate all their grandfather's, great grandfather's where they lived, what they did, their occupation and we as a people tend not to go past your first or second generation. So I challenge families to go in deeper and do your own family tree, your own

family history, right. And it is when it comes to adolescents apart from books, apart from lived experience go to a museum that talks about Black history and walk through that museum with your child and talk about it. And you would recognize that you are also ignorant of many things. So this is a lifelong journey where you're learning. And in the moment if you see your adolescent displaying biases, check them on it. And talk through it. I think in the chat someone spoke about my kid is on computer game and they're cursing and using different words how do I address that? And I tell parents you've got to be real with your kids and do some role reversal what if you spoke to your child using that type of language, let them walk through that experience and see how they feel and what the negative impacts could be because of that. Then what if that happened outside of the home environment, what would result into that. And there's a good documentary that's called [indiscernible] I think that walks through what are the challenges of prolonged video gaming and sit down and watch it with your child and have that discussion with your adolescent.

Michelle: So the next question is one I'm going out to all 3 panelists either of you may answer it I'm going to read it directly: Do adopted children in -- do adopted children in a mixed household accept the ethnicity of the parent that is not -- let me rephrase that accepts the race of the parent that is not their race as their preferred race?

Dr. Lee; I have an answer to this question. People have done studies in France because of [inaudible] French parents adopt a lot of Korean kids. When the kids came to the French villages eventually developed biases against Asians just like in their environment because they're not looking [inaudible]

looking around in their family and that's where they pick up these queues and identify with the people around them and therefore develop [inaudible].

Michelle: Thank you. Did anyone else want to pitch in, go ahead, Dr. Shah.

Dr. Shah: I'll just say you know, that identity is complex and it's fluid and it changes with context and space and time. And I think it's really important for parents with children that are adopted to help them in coming -- coming into their own and what that means about various identities that is they might hold it's not necessarily -- they might relate to [inaudible] various identities. It's also really important to help them recognize how they're going to be read in the world. Because as much as they might be you know, in a family that is not of their race, they're going to be read in the world a particular way and to develop the conscious necessities to understand what those particular -- what those particular ways might be, how you might navigate that, you know, encouraging your child to be in close proximity to also identify that way who can speak to them, mentor them talk what their experiences have been this, I think it's really important to allow children and encourage children to connect with how both how they identify in the world and how other people are going to read them in the world and that means a lot of conversations around identity and changing and being fluent.

Dr. Smile: I agree. I'll just resonate what both speakers spoke, stated. And it's again going back to protect versus prepare.

It's a combination of both.

Because you could have a loving home environment but when you step out that door, right, it may look totally different. So if you have a child who's adopted not of your ethnicity or from a country which you -- they're living learn about where they were adopted from, right, learn about their customs

and cultures to you equip them with that knowledge and strategy to deal with it when they're going to be faced in the world with biases.

Michelle: So hearing you clearly that all families need to be talking race whether you're -- whether you are Brown, whether you are Asian, whether you are mixed that we all have a responsibility as the adult or that significant adult in their lives to be having a race conversation. But Dr. Lee we're going to go back to something you said in your presentation that if children are not learning biases from their caregivers where are they getting it from and you had mentioned some intentional strategies about physical education. One of the comments that came through was, did the physical [inaudible] feed in a bias that already exists about the perceptions of racialized people and physical activity.

I'll leave those 2 with us.

>> I'll address the first question first. So the kids get these ideas just like Dr. Smile said from media. And from their immediate environment and from the schools and people they interact with. So if we construct our environment as parents in a very -- tonight go home, go through your books that you have bought for your kids look at the toys you've bought for your kids look at the dolls you have bought for kids see whether they are actually of diversity or just they are really very similar to what your own experiences. Look at the movies and TV programs that you're watching. And together with your kids, look at them. Are they about people of your own race or about different race. Take a look very quickly, you realize you are construction of your environment is really very limited most of us. So that's -- I think this is one important thing. I want to address the other one. Some people have actually criticized us for physical activities the reason we do physical activities and using in China people actually don't make this assumption about Black people being athletic. This notion possibly in Canada or in the U.S. but not in China. So but the idea is actually is we want kids to learn from this adult, learn this person's names not the person's race. We never mention the racialized label we just asked learn James going to teach you how to do exercise.

This person could be a white person could be a south Asian person doesn't matter. The idea is for children to learn to envision this person to think of this person as an individual not as a group label. So one of the things I really want to talk -- to tell everybody [inaudible] 6, 7 years of age you shouldn't refer to someone on the street by their racialized labels, you have to refer to person as individual. Once you treat each person as individual, your child actually learns that. And the children themselves before 6, 7 years of age even though they have a notion of race but they don't when they encounter a person they hardly ever actually treat the person as Black person Chinese person, Asian person.

It's the way adults actually give them these labels and then they attach to it. So when they see some individual [indiscernible] instead of oh this is Johnny, this is Michael, this is Jennifer, it becomes oh this Black, Asian and Chinese.

So, I think -- so before 6 or 7 years of age I think I would encourage parents not when you encounter an individual of other ethnicity -- after 6, 7 years of age when kids have -- you would be surprised to see this but this is how I saw when I do studies kids do not racialize other kids in their classroom until adults put the label towards them and then kids start to realize oh there are race differences.

Michelle: Okay. Thank you for that. There is a very specific question where you're being asked if

there is time, is the term racial bias being equated with racism, Dr. Shah, someone you'd like to talk. Dr. Shah: I'll jump in. So, racial bias is often a preference, right there's a preference in a particular direction. There might be a negative preference or a positive preference but it's more sort of in the realm of preference. When we talk about racism we're talking about attaching to that structural, historical constructs that -- that lead to differences in power, right. So racism is the differences in how people -- in power in economics and social -- social capital as a result of the race that you belong to. So this added element of power to be able to determine, you know, who has access and opportunity is the separate element of racism that isn't there necessarily with racial bias.

So racial bias can happen multiple ways but racism is specifically -- it's equated with power. So white folks would -- having power within a racial group that would be considered racism.

Floydeen: Michelle, may I comment?

Michelle: Sure. Please.

Floydeen: Yes. And I think to add to what Dr. Shah said, racism comes with a level of pain that an impact on people's mental, emotional and physical health in a way that it may not be seen through racial bias and lends itself to continuing trauma, a trauma -- in terms of how it has an impact. You can feel it, you could almost taste it. And therefore, people have a physical emotional or mental response to it, I would say and even spiritual.

Dr. Lee: I agree thank you so much for sharing that, Floydeen.

Michelle: Dr. Lee go ahead.

Dr. Lee: Racism to me is an ideology that basically dehumanizes other races. Sometimes can be institutionalized and then build the social hierarchy. So but racial biases however as I mentioned at the beginning of my talk involves 3 aspects, attitude -- prejudice and stereotypes and discrimination. So you may not discriminate in your behaviour against other race individuals but you may have some stereotypes. So I think majority of the people -- some form of racial bias but may not be racist, so I think that's an important distinction.

Michelle: Thank you. I am noting the time. And you as audience have been incredibly patient with us. And I want to extend my thanks to those of you who have stayed on the line. I also want to extend my thanks and appreciation to our distinct panelists. The hope for this conversation in putting it together was to create a space where we can begin to inform and educate our family care givers across our District about how to be having these conversations. In my work, I hear a lot from family caregivers who say to me, Michelle, I don't want to talk race with my babes, they're too young, they're too little. I'm not going to have the conversation because I'm very concerned I'm going to make them racist if I do or I don't like when we talk about this thing called race because it makes my children uncomfortable. I'm hoping today that you will walk away, right, with the understanding that it's essential. While we are not teaching our children this idea about implicit bias, there's a responsibility as the adult caregivers in their lives to be keeping an ongoing conversation with them about race and racism.

I make the distinction and I pose the question before, with our children do we start a conversation about race or do we start the conversation about racism, right? And we heard Dr. Lee say well, you know, they're beginning to make distinctions really early with race, right and that no baby is born with

an implicit bias, that implicit bias develops as they grow and grow. What that essentially says for us as the adult, we may not teach it but we have a significant role in an ongoing conversation it's not a one-time conversation to say, I've done it. It becomes an ongoing conversation. I just want to reiterate really quickly some of the comments we heard and the strategies. I heard someone said you know what it's really essential that we do self-inquiry, we begin with ourselves to get a sense of how are we the adults thinking feeling about race and are we comfortable, you know, I read an article where a doctor said that if you are not comfortable with it, your children are going to see through that, right. And that you may want to be just open and honest in where you're at with it and begin the conversation from there. Please don't be afraid to do some homework yourself to get an understanding. There are a number of resources out there.

As a matter of fact you can just Google it. You could Google how do I talk to my kids about race and you would be surprised the amount of information that comes up. So I want to extend a thanks and appreciation to each of the panelists. I want to take the opportunity to thank my team. You've been instrumental in getting these 3 sessions up and going. I know you're exhausted and thrilled we're at the end of it so thank you for that. Our Associate Director, I want to thank my appreciation for her in allowing us to create this type of space for this conversation. There's a question about what is the [indiscernible] curriculum is representative and reflect active. I see Dr. Shah is smiling. This is an ongoing committed work of our District and we continue to work with all staff to ensure that our students are being reflected and represented in their work. Are we there yet? Absolutely not. Does the work continue? Absolutely. And you know that it's a commitment that's come from the top and we'll continue that work. So on that note, we are looking at doing more of these conversations series in the fall. So please look out for them. And that we have ongoing work to do in conversations to have. So we are having a survey. If you could just quickly just get that link and just provide us a quick feedback so how you felt about the session would really appreciate it. And you know, talking race with families there are a list of resources that are available on the TDSB site. So please visit that link there and get the information that you need. All 3 of our conversations will also be posted on the Toronto District School Board site and so please feel free at a later date when you have some time to just go and re-listen to the conversations. So, my extended appreciation to Trustee Rachael Chernos-Lin, thank you for hanging all 3 sessions with us.

I want to extend my thanks to the committees collaborators and partners in the work in engagement across our District and I want to thank each and every one of the participants for spending your Friday evening with us please enjoy it after you complete our survey though.

Thank you again to our panelists and everyone, have a great evening.

>> Thank you.

>> Thank you. Good night.

>> Bye bye.

This series is jointly hosted by the TDSB and PIAC.

