



# **FIVE THINGS TRANSRACIAL FAMILIES NEED TO KNOW TO THRIVE**

Presented By

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# 1. Love is not enough

- The myth of colorblindness
- Your child's experience will not be the same as yours
- Check your assumptions - White privilege <https://www.pactadopt.org/resources/white-privilege.html#privilege>
- Help your child understand the rich powerful legacy they come from (not enough for your child to just learn about their culture and history, you have to embrace it and ensure it's a lived cultural experience)
- Your child needs enriching cultural and community experiences
- Questions to ask yourself:
  - How can I help my child understand the world and their place in it?
  - How do I provide my child with enriching cultural experiences?
  - How do I engage with my child's culture and community?
  - Are there changes I need to make for the sake of my child?

## 2. Your kids are different

- Understanding differences upholds individual identity
- Support your kids living authentically in their identity.
- You won't be able to understand everything
- Learn to be ok being uncomfortable
- Questions to ask yourself
  - Is my child's culture an integrated part of how we function as a family? If not, how will you celebrate their culture?
  - Do I encourage my child to love what makes them different?
  - Am I the kind of person who likes to sit in the shadows? Am I able to step forward and advocate?

# 3. Representation Matters

- Racial and/or cultural mirrors for your child in daily life
- Racial and/or cultural experiences for you – make your child's race/culture part of your experience
- Questions to ask yourself:
  - Am I ever the only person of your race in a room?
  - What books do I read? TV shows do I watch? Music do I listen to?
  - What cultural icons do I uphold? Ex. Taylor Swift versus Cardi B
  - Who produced the artwork that hangs in my home?
  - Does my child have role models that look like them? Teachers/school staff/doctors/extracurricular activities...
  - Will my child see themselves in my family/friends/church/community?

# 4. Relationship surprises

- Be prepared for the people in your life to disappoint you
- Questions to ask yourself:
  - Is my child the first person of this race and/or culture in my intimate life?
  - How does my extended family view and talk about my child's cultural community?
  - How have I prepared my extended family for our child
  - Am I prepared to put my child first in all situations?
  - Am I prepared to let go of family or friends?

# 5. Communication is key

- Talking to your child early and often about adoption
- Talking with your child about race and ethnicity
- Follow your child's lead – if you do 1 & 2, communication becomes easy. There may be times you child won't want to talk about adoption or race. But you have laid the foundation.
- Questions to ask yourself:
  - How can I learn about and understand racism?
  - Do I talk often and positively of my child's cultural heritage and community?
  - Does my child have safe spaces/people they can turn to talk to?

# RESOURCES

- Transracial Journeys <https://www.transracialjourneys.org/>
- Pact an Adoption Alliance <https://www.pactadopt.org/app/servlet/HomePage>
- Adoption Network Cleveland <https://www.adoptionnetwork.org/service-areas/family-youth/weaving-cultures-transracial-family-group.html>
- Child Mind Institute <https://childmind.org/>
- Culture Camps <https://adoptivefamilytravel.com/resources/culturecamps>
- Child Information Gateway: "Adoption by Family Type: Racially and Culturally Diverse Families" <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adoptive/family-type/diversefamilies/>
- Book: In Their Voices: Black Americans on Transracial Adoption by **Rhonda M. Roorda** <https://www.amazon.com/Their-Voices-Americans-Transracial-Adoption/dp/0231172214/>

# People to Know

- Angela Tucker – Director, Post-Adoption Services @ Amara, Filmmaker, Speaker (Transracial Adoptee)
- April Dinwoodie- Executive Director @ Transracial Journeys, Podcaster, Speaker (Transracial Adoptee)
- Nicole Chung – Author of “All You Can Ever Know” (Transracial Adoptee)
- Kim Stevens-Program Manager at North American Council on Adoptable Children (Transracial Parent)
- Jaeran Kim PHD, Assistant Professor at the University of Washington – Tacoma (Transracial Adoptee)