

*An education capable of saving humanity
is no small undertaking: it involves the spiritual development of man,
the enhancement of his value as an individual,
and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.*

Dr. Montessori, "Education and Peace"

Dear Cedars Community,

Over the last few weeks, we have collectively witnessed a critical moment of our lifetime. A moment in which this country has risen up in the face of injustice, specifically the systemic racism and police brutality that led to the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Mike Ramos, and George Floyd. We want to address this as a community, and we want to state unequivocally that we condemn and oppose racism and violence in the strongest terms.

As our nation grapples with very necessary change, members of our community, too, have deeply contemplated our role as educators in addressing the unjust deaths of these individuals, and the systemic racism that led to these deaths, as well as the ways systemic racism is woven, beyond the police force, into all institutions in this country, including educational institutions. As educators, we recognize the power we hold in shaping generations to come, and the ways in which we can contribute to the creation of a more just society.

Over the past year, our staff has been engaged in conversations around equity and anti-bias anti-racist education. We know that this work is long-term, and that our work will continue in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. We are committed as a school to growing together in this work, and to investigating and dismantling bias in our classrooms and ourselves. With love and a dedication to justice for all of our children, families and teachers, and especially those who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color, we are committed to engaging in this work in this moment and beyond.

Some of our first steps will be to closely examine the materials in our classrooms and to remove those which reproduce bias, stereotypes and false narratives. We will begin this work over the summer, not only removing certain books and materials, but also bringing in materials that represent diverse perspectives, experiences and voices. We will also be using this time to invest in and diversify our libraries at each level. We plan to invest in professional development for staff that centers anti-bias anti-racism and equitable practices. We plan to carve out space where, as a group, we can dig into this work and cultivate a culture of critical consciousness, self-awareness, and loving accountability.

For now, we want to offer some resources that may guide you in having conversations at home with your child/ren about race and racism. We know that these conversations are coming up, because our children are listening and learning, always. We know that justice and fairness are of great importance to young children, and we know that, when invited into the conversation, they will stand for justice. We also know that, without this invitation, without the language, without these conversations, they are absorbing the

biases of their culture and accepting them as truth. Guiding children in these conversations may feel uncomfortable at first, as it is for many of us as adults, and we will all feel ourselves learning. Please know you are not alone.

As a community, we want to ensure that this moment carries on into a movement. A movement in which our community grows, through language, thought and action, its commitment to equity, justice and peace. We will leave you with the words of Dr. Montessori, who was a strong advocate for justice. “True peace...suggests the triumph of justice and love among men; it reveals the existence of a better world where harmony reigns” (*Peace and Education*).

With gratitude and humility,
Cedars Montessori School

How to talk to children about race and racism

- Your Kids Aren't Too Young to Talk About Race
<https://www.prettygooddesign.org/blog/Blog%20Post%20Title%20One-5new4>
- How to Talk to Kids About Race: Books and Resources That Can Help
<https://www.readbrightly.com/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-race-books-and-resources-that-can-help/>
- Why All Parents Should Talk With Their Kids About Social Identity
<https://www.npr.org/2019/10/08/767205198/the-things-parents-dont-talk-about-with-their-kids-but-should>
- How to Talk to Kids about Race and Racism
<https://www.parenttoolkit.com/social-and-emotional-development/advice/social-awareness/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-race-and-racism>

Children's book resources

- Embrace Race | Children's Books
<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/26-childrens-books-to-support-conversations-on-race-racism-resistance>
- Social Justice Books
<https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/>
- American Indian Children's Literature
<https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com>

Adult book list

- How To Be An Antiracist, by Ibram X. Kendi
- So You Want to Talk About Race, by Ijeoma Oluo
- Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? By Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum

- This Book is Antiracist, Tiffany Jewell (Montessorian! Great book for adults and young adults)
- Me and White Supremacy, Layla F. Saad

Organizations to follow

- Antiracism Center <https://antiracismcenter.com>
- EmbraceRace <https://www.embracerace.org>
- The Conscious Kid <https://www.theconsciouskid.org>
- Raising Race Conscious Children <https://www.theconsciouskid.org>

Antiracism resources

- Rachel Ricketts | Antiracism Resources
<https://www.rachelricketts.com/antiracism-resources>
- Seeing White (podcast)
- 75 Ways to Support Racial Justice
<https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234>