

# TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION

COMMON QUESTIONS  
FROM WHITE ADOPTIVE PARENTS

BE *the* BRIDGE

THIS IS A SAMPLE FROM  
"BTB TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION: FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR HEALTHY CROSS-RACE PARENTING."  
AVAILABLE SOON AT [BETHEBRIDGE.COM/STORE](https://bethebridge.com/store).

## **AREN'T WE MAKING RACE TOO BIG OF A DEAL?**

Many white parents believe that talking to their children about race somehow ruins their innocence. This is similar to saying, "I'm afraid to explain traffic safety to my child, so I will let her be crushed by a car." Your child of color will face challenges that are directly related to how society perceives them. Like it or not, we are a society that has created racial categories, and those categories have meaning. It is far better for your child to understand and equip them to face racism than it is to ignore it.

## **IF I TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT RACE, ISN'T THIS GOING TO MAKE THEM FEEL DIFFERENT?**

If there is an overwhelming theme that emerges from listening to the voices of adult adoptees, it is that being a child of color and growing up in a white family is what makes your child feel different, not acknowledging the fact. Talking to your child about race educates them and prepares them to live in a world that has created this social construct.

## **IF WE TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT RACISM, WON'T THIS TEACH THEM TO FEEL BAD ABOUT THEMSELVES?**

Teaching your child about racism helps to protect them and empowers them to act on someone else's ignorance. Sadly, systemic racism and individual acts of racism are realities that your child must be prepared to deal with. Denying this fact will leave your child isolated and alone. In addition, when racial incidents do happen to your child, they need to know that you are a safe person to come to.

## **EVEN IF I DO NOT MAKE CHANGES TO MY ENVIRONMENT OR LIFE, ISN'T IT BETTER FOR THE CHILD TO BE IN A LOVING HOME INSTEAD OF IN FOSTER CARE?**

Providing your child a loving home does not excuse the changes that may need to happen in your child's environment. Immersing yourself in spaces and communities where you are the minority and your child is part of the majority takes intentionality. Is it really loving to know what's best for your child and not do it? Would you do that about anything else? If your child was sick and you knew medicine would make their quality of life significantly better, that it would help them go from surviving to thriving, would you skip the medicine?

## **AS LONG AS I LOVE MY CHILD, ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?**

White adoptive parents often enter into transracial adoption naive to the lived experiences of people of color. Also, they may come to cross-race parenting with worldviews about race they learned from other white people, which often includes color-blind ideology or minimizing racial difference. When white parents refuse to do the work of listening and learning from adult transracial adoptees and people of color, their children are the ones left to suffer those consequences.

## **IF WE PREPARE OUR CHILDREN TO FACE PREJUDICE AND RACISM, AREN'T WE TEACHING THEM TO LOOK FOR THINGS THAT MAY NOT BE THERE? WON'T THIS MAKE THEM PARANOID?**

No, teaching your child to face prejudice and racism will give them words for things they are experiencing. As a parent, you want to encourage your child to share their real feelings and help them process their racial experiences. Instead of making them paranoid, this empowers them to safeguard their dignity.

## **IS IT OKAY FOR ME TO SAY I WANT A WHITE BABY?**

Yes. Parenting a child of color comes with additional responsibility beyond what is required in parenting a same-race child. Children are children, of course, no matter what color, so on the surface level you may believe that only love is required. Imagine parenting a child in a wheelchair and not being willing to equip your child with the supportive equipment and network needed to help your child thrive. Similarly, if you are not willing or able to provide your child of color with the supportive tools they will need to thrive in a racialized society, it's okay to admit that. Remember that the goal is not about you "getting a child". The goal is to find the right family for a child in need. This is not a decision that should be rushed into in order to get a child for your family; the needs of your potential child must remain at the forefront. Transracial adoption requires you to be thoughtful and intentional in this process. As you consider bringing a child of color into your home, think about your willingness to take on the additional responsibilities. Is your spouse willing? Is your extended family willing to educate themselves about the realities your child will face? If the answer is no to any of these questions, it is definitely okay to say you want a white baby.



## ABOUT BE THE BRIDGE

Be the Bridge (BTB) was founded in 2016 by Latasha Morrison to encourage racial reconciliation among all ethnicities, promote racial unity in America, and to equip others to become bridge-builders. Be the Bridge exists to empower people and culture towards racial healing, equity and reconciliation.

Within the few years, Be the Bridge has gained national and global reach with more than 1,000 in-person discussion groups and an online community of 25,000+ dedicated to learning and growing as bridge-builders. The first discussion guide has been downloaded more than 15,000 times. Be the Bridge continues to develop content for a community of people who share a common goal of creating a healthy dialogue about race.

Be the Bridge is committed to leading hard conversations about race and creating brave spaces for education, truth-telling, and advocacy. The mission is accomplished through our programs:

BTB101: For White People  
BTBPOC: For People of Color  
BTBTRA: Support for Transracial Adoption  
BTBYouth, and  
BTBUniversity.

Be the Bridge aims to inspire people to have a distinctive and transformative response to racial division and be present and intentional toward racial reconciliation.

Be the Bridge is a 501(c)3 organization. Learn more about how you can become a sustaining partner [here](#).

For more bridge-building resources, visit [bethebridge.com](http://bethebridge.com).