Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

About Table Talk
Families often want to discuss news stories and other timely societal events. It's a great opportunity to engage children in rich conversation, share important values and encourage lifelong interest in the news. These talks can happen on the way to school, during a walk or over a meal. Research shows that dinnertime conversation benefits the health, emotional and academic outcomes for children of all ages. Each Table Talk guide below includes a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas to take action and additional resources.

Here are some tips for discussion:
- Find out what young people know and use the summary information to expand upon their prior knowledge. Ask what else they want to know and research together to learn more.

- When discussing the topic, ask young open ended questions that deepen the conversation. Be mindful not to judge their responses and listen thoughtfully.

- Think together about a child-level action they can take; this can be something they do on their own or something you do together or as a family.

New Table Talk

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

What is Critical Race Theory and Why Is it in the News So Much?
Engage in a family conversation about what Critical Race Theory is, why state laws are being passed under the name of "critical race theory" and "divisive concepts" and talk about the importance of discussing racism and other forms of oppression. (Ages 10 and up)

Cade Martin, Dawn Arlotta, USCDCP
Featured Table Talk

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**The Dangers of Disinformation**

Talk with your family about the dangers of "false" news and disinformation by examining the January 6 U.S. Capitol invasion and the events leading up to it. *Ages 10 and up*

![Image of a person holding a sign that says "Check facts before posting" in front of the Capitol building.](iStock)

Previous Table Talks

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Bias and Hate in Online Games**

Talk with your family about the experiences people have while playing multiplayer online games--both the positive social interaction and the hate and harassment. *Ages 10 and up*
Engage in a family conversation about the history and importance of Juneteenth and what you can do to honor the day. *(Ages 7 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Honoring Juneteenth**

Engage in a family conversation about the history and importance of Juneteenth and what you can do to honor the day. *(Ages 7 and up)*

**George Floyd, Racism and Law Enforcement (in English and en Español)**
Engage your family in a discussion about the killing of George Floyd, how bias and hate escalate and the larger context of systemic racism. *(Ages 11 and up)*

![Protest Sign: George Floyd's Life Mattered](Fibonacci Blue | Flickr)

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**What is Voter Suppression?**

Talk with your family about what voter suppression is and how it impacts our ability to vote. *(Ages 10 and up)*

![Voter ID Protest](Michael Fleshman | CC BY-SA 2.0)
Lonnie Chavis of ‘This is Us' Reflects on His Experiences with Racism

Using an essay written by Lonnie Chavis of *This is Us* and his unique point of view as a Black actor, explore racism in our society with your family. *(Ages 8 and up)*

![Walt Disney Television | CC BY-ND 2.0](image)

Propaganda, Extremism and Online Recruitment Tactics

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about propaganda, extremism and recruitment tactics of extremist groups. *(Ages 14 and up)*
**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**The Purpose and Power of Protest**

Talk with your family about the purpose, history and impact of protests. *(Ages 8 and up)*

**Let’s Talk about Voting!**

Learn more about the history and purpose of voting and the ways in which the right to vote has been prevented and suppressed throughout our history. *(Ages 10 and up)*
Learn about the Electoral College, find out why it's controversial and discuss whether you think it's fair and equitable.  

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**What is the Electoral College and Why Is it Controversial?**

Learn about the Electoral College, find out why it's controversial and discuss whether you think it's fair and equitable.  

**What's the Census and Why Does it Matter?**

Engage in a family conversation about what the U.S. Census is, why it's important, how it impacts the Electoral College and what some of the issues and controversies have been over the years.  

(Ages 10 and up)
Talk with your family about the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on communities of color and how systemic racism is a contributing factor. *(Ages 12 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**How Systemic Racism Impacts Coronavirus Racial Disparities**

Talk with your family about the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on communities of color and how systemic racism is a contributing factor. *(Ages 12 and up)*

**Draw Me Safe: Coloring and Conversation about a Pandemic**
Use Ricardo Morales' "What to Do in a Pandemic... Our Cousins Know" coloring series to be creative, pass the time, relieve stress and engage in family conversations with children about how to stay safe and well during the coronavirus pandemic. (*Ages 6 and up*)

![Image of two animals]

*© 2020 Ricardo Levins Morales*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**COVID-19 and Societal Inequities**

Discuss how societal inequities are highlighted and perpetuated by the impact of the Coronavirus. (*Ages 10 and up*)
Discuss the 2020 presidential election and the extent to which sexism plays a role in this unprecedented campaign. (Ages 10 and up)

**Tools and Strategies**

**Elections, Gender and Bias**

Discuss the 2020 presidential election and the extent to which sexism plays a role in this unprecedented campaign. (Ages 10 and up)

**What Is Heterosexism and What Can I Do About It?**

Engage in a family discussion about the different ways that heterosexism manifests in society and schools and explore ways to address it. (Ages 10 and up)
Talk with your family members about how polls inform, influence and impact elections. (Ages 10 and up)

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

**Election Polls**

Talk with your family members about how polls inform, influence and impact elections. *(Ages 10 and up)*

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

**Diversity in Media and Why Visibility Matters**

Talk with your family about the importance of diverse representations and visibility in the media. *(Ages 8 and up)*
Engage in a family discussion about the use of "they" and "them" as a gender-neutral pronoun. (Ages 10 and up)

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Gender-Neutral Pronouns Make Headlines**

Engage in a family discussion about the use of "they" and "them" as a gender-neutral pronoun. *(Ages 10 and up)*

![Merriam-Webster/Twitter](Merriam-Webster/Twitter)

**Merriam-Webster/Twitter**

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Antisemitism Today**
This family discussion guide shares current information about the state of antisemitism in the U.S. today. (Ages 12 and up)

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

The Little Mermaid, Diversity and Bias

Family discussion guide about the recent controversy about the casting of an African-American woman in The Little Mermaid. (Ages 7 and up)
**Tools and Strategies**

**Gun Violence and Mass Shootings**

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about mass shootings, violence, guns and gun laws. *(Ages 12 and up)*

---

**Stonewall and LGBTQ Equity**

Talk with your family about the Stonewall uprising, which took place on June 28, 1969 and is viewed by many as sparking the movement for LGBTQ rights in the U.S. *(Ages 12 and up)*
Slurs and other biased language have become commonplace. What are they and how can we address them in order to prevent the next generation from perpetuating this offensive language? (*Ages 10 and up*)

**Slurs and Biased Language (en Español)**

Slurs and other biased language have become commonplace. What are they and how can we address them in order to prevent the next generation from perpetuating this offensive language? (*Ages 10 and up*)
Kyle Korver, a basketball player with the Utah Jazz, writes an essay about racism and white privilege. Discuss the essay with your youth using our Table Talk parent/family discussion guide. *(Ages 12 and up)*

Women in sports face a wide range of inequalities. Talk with your family about the lawsuit the U.S. women’s soccer team filed against the federation that governs soccer in the U.S., which cites “institutionalized gender discrimination.” *(Ages 10 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Women’s Soccer Team Takes a Stand**

Women in sports face a wide range of inequalities. Talk with your family about the lawsuit the U.S. women’s soccer team filed against the federation that governs soccer in the U.S., which cites “institutionalized gender discrimination.” *(Ages 10 and up)*
Tools and Strategies

Gillette’s New Ad: ‘The Best Men Can Be’
There has been a heightened awareness of and discussion around sexual harassment and sexual assault. Use this discussion on Gillette’s ad about gender roles and masculinity to talk about these issues with your family. (Ages 8 and up)

Tools and Strategies

Shooting at a Pittsburgh Synagogue
Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about the deadly shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA, antisemitism and hate.
Colin Kaepernick, former N.F.L. quarterback with the San Francisco 49ers, took a stand about racial injustice. This Table Talk provides a discussion guide about the Nike ad featuring Kaepernick and the campaign's slogan “Believe in something.”

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Nike’s Ad and Believing in Something**

Colin Kaepernick, former N.F.L. quarterback with the San Francisco 49ers, took a stand about racial injustice. This Table Talk provides a discussion guide about the Nike ad featuring Kaepernick and the campaign's slogan “Believe in something.”

![Image of Colin Kaepernick](image-url)
Kids, Allowance and Gender

A survey showed that in U.S. families, boys are paid twice as much allowance as girls for doing weekly chores. Have a discussion with your youth about the "gender allowance gap" and their thoughts about chores and allowance in your home. (Ages 7 and up)

What is DACA and Who Are the DREAMers?

Have a family discussion about the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, what it means to be 'American' and the consequences if DACA is eliminated. (Ages 11 and up)
There have been horrific stories of children being ripped from their parents at the border. Discuss with your youth what they have heard, how they feel about the situation, what it means to seek asylum and how they can help. *(Ages 11 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Family Separations and Detentions at the Border**

There have been horrific stories of children being ripped from their parents at the border. Discuss with your youth what they have heard, how they feel about the situation, what it means to seek asylum and how they can help. *(Ages 11 and up)*
We are seeing more and more news and social media stories about people experiencing bias as they go about their daily lives. Here are some tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about incidents of everyday bias. *(Ages 11 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Scientist Drawings and Gender Stereotypes**

Research studies, past and present, revealed that most children’s scientist drawings depict men. Use this discussion guide to talk with youth about the "Draw-a-Scientist" tests and what they reveal about gender stereotypes. *(Ages 7 and up)*
Since August 2017, about 655,000 Rohingya people have fled into neighboring Bangladesh to escape violent and deadly persecution in Myanmar. Here are some tips and strategies to help guide a discussion with youth about the Rohingya refugee crisis. *(Ages 13 and up)*

**The Rohingya Crisis**

Since August 2017, about 655,000 Rohingya people have fled into neighboring Bangladesh to escape violent and deadly persecution in Myanmar. Here are some tips and strategies to help guide a discussion with youth about the Rohingya refugee crisis. *(Ages 13 and up)*

**What is the 'Muslim Ban'?**

*Seyyed Mahmoud Hosseini, Tasnim News Agency/CC BY 4.0*
Use this discussion guide to have a parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about President Trump's ban on foreign nationals into the U.S. *(Ages 13 and up)*

On December 14, 2017, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to dismantle net neutrality regulations that were passed in 2015. Discuss with youth what net neutrality means and how this veto will impact people's ability to express their thoughts and ideas online. *(Ages 12 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**What is Net Neutrality?**

On December 14, 2017, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to dismantle net neutrality regulations that were passed in 2015. Discuss with youth what net neutrality means and how this veto will impact people's ability to express their thoughts and ideas online. *(Ages 12 and up)*
**Tools and Strategies**

**Why We Need Diverse Books**

Talk with youth about literature, diversity and what other aspects of their life or forms of media lack diversity. *(Ages 7 and up)*

Airman 1st Class Kaylee Dubois, photographer

**Sexual Harassment in the News**

In October 2017, Harvey Weinstein, a powerful producer in the movie industry for decades, was accused of sexual harassment by more than thirty women. Use these tips and strategies to discuss with youth their thoughts, experiences and how they can support others. *(Ages 12 and up)*
Here are some tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about the lessons of Charlottesville, racism, anti-Semitism, white supremacy, the alt right and the First Amendment. *(Ages 12 and up)*
More than 150 years after the Civil War, there is a new drive to remove Confederate monuments. Discuss with youth why they think this issue is controversial and why monuments hold so much power and meaning. *(Ages 13 and up)*

![Image of Confederate monument being removed](Abdazizar/CC BY-SA 4.0)

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**What Bullying Is and Is Not**

Use this parent and family roundtable discussion guide to talk with youth about bullying/cyberbullying and how to be an ally. *(Ages 7 and up)*
"We Think Black Men are Bigger than White Men (Even When they're Not)," a perception revealed in a study by APA. Talk with youth about stereotypes and how misperceptions of others impact our interactions. *Ages 12 and up*

**Race, Perception and Implicit Bias**

"We Think Black Men are Bigger than White Men (Even When they're Not)," a perception revealed in a study by APA. Talk with youth about stereotypes and how misperceptions of others impact our interactions. *Ages 12 and up*

**Hate Symbols**
We see symbols every day in all aspects of our lives. Lately, a proliferation of hate symbols is increasing concern. Use this discussion guide to engage youth in conversations about swastikas and other hate symbols. (*Ages 13 and up*)

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**What is Fake News?**

Here are some tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about "fake news," what it means and how to identify it. (*Ages 11 and up*)
Nice, France and Our Response to Terrorist Attacks

Have a parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about the 2016 attacks in Nice, France and understanding the complexities around incidents of terrorism. *(Ages 13 and up)*

Responding to Cyberhate

Online hate speech, or "cyberhate," is often in the news. Use these tips and strategies to discuss with youth two different responses to cyberhate highlighted in the news and ways they can respond. *(Ages 12 and up)*
**Tools and Strategies**

**Bias in the Presidential Election**

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about bias and bullying in the presidential election. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**Propaganda, Extremism and Online Recruitment Tactics**

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about propaganda, extremism and recruitment tactics of extremist groups. *(Ages 14 and up)*
Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about implicit bias and the role it plays in the movie industry, and award platforms. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**Movies and the Diversity Gap**

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about implicit bias and the role it plays in the movie industry, and award platforms. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**Dolls and Diversity**
Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about dolls and diversity. *Ages 7 and up*

In the wake of terrorist attacks and ISIS, here are tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about Muslims, islamophobia and being an ally. *Ages 11 and up*

---

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Islamophobia and Being an Ally**

In the wake of terrorist attacks and ISIS, here are tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about Muslims, islamophobia and being an ally. *Ages 11 and up*
School Discipline and the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Behavior that once led to a trip to the principal’s office and a detention, now often leads to suspension, expulsion and/or arrest. Use these tips for parent/family roundtable discussion with youth about incidents of harsh school discipline. *(Ages 12 and up)*

Refugees, Reactions and World Response

Refugees from Syria have been leaving their homes in search of safety and assistance. Use these tips and strategies to have family conversations with youth about the refugee crisis. *(Ages 12 and up)*
Two fourth grade students expressed their opinion's about their school's lunch policy that required boys and girls to sit at separate tables. Have family conversations with youth about school policies and making a difference. (Ages 7 and up)

Kids Can Make a Difference

Two fourth grade students expressed their opinion's about their school's lunch policy that required boys and girls to sit at separate tables. Have family conversations with youth about school policies and making a difference. (Ages 7 and up)

Sports, Mascots and Bias
The Washington D.C's football team's name continues to spark controversy. Here are tips and strategies for family conversations with young people about mascots, sports team names, slurs and epithets. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Teenagers and Technology**

Teenagers are online constantly. Use these conversation tips to help guide family conversations with youth about their technology use and habits. *(Ages 11 and up)*
Caitlyn Jenner and Being Transgender

Caitlyn Jenner has been in the news recently because she recently came out as transgender. *(Ages 12 and up)*

What's Fair and Unfair About Student Dress Codes?

Over the years, schools have implemented student dress codes to address a wide range of issues, some of which have been quite controversial. *(Ages 11 and up)*