

Racial Justice Resources to Promote Social and Emotional Skills: Using Respect to Develop Successful Relationships

Nydia Ntouda: On today's webinar, we have Mr. Antonio Freitas who will officially introduce himself and tell us more about the webinar. Antonio, take it away.

Antonio Freitas: Thanks so much, Nydia. Hello to the more than 200 people on today's conversation. It's great to see some friendly faces and spaces through the chat window that people are sharing from our previous webcast. We're so excited for those of you that have joined us for the previous two and for those new friends that are coming in today for the first time.

Humans are social beings. One of the most influential parts of early childhood is learning to start, grow, and maintain relationships with others, whether it's with peers, family members, educators, or other occurring adults in the lives of children. When kids learn early on about respecting other's differences, they can set the stage for a life full of healthy relationships.

Today, we, here at the Sesame Workshop, are excited to continue this third and final of three conversations using our newest racial justice resources to promote social and emotional skills. For our talk today, we'll explore Sesame Street in Communities resources you can use with others supporting Head Start children and families to develop successful relationships with others.

As mentioned before, my name is Antonio Freitas. I have the privilege of working as the director of educational experiences here at the workshop on the US Social Impact Team, and also as a partner to the NCHBHS National Center with Head Start. I'm excited to share with you today some of the tools our team has used to create and share with children and caregivers with resources you can work on.

During the first two webinars of our series, we explored four different types of our total six assets available on the Sesame Street in Communities website connected to each and every topic page. In today's conversation, we're going to continue to explore those racial justice resources we began several weeks ago and think about how you can integrate and embed these materials into your work supporting children as they build social-emotional skills that will help them develop successful relationships with other children and the adults that care for them.

Now if you missed either of those earlier workshops in the series, don't fret. We've recorded it. We have made it available on the ECLKC website. But for now, all you need to do is know that each of our three webcasts will be available so that you can dive a little bit deeper into these topic pages on racial justice and explore the ways to use them in the assets connected to what we're talking about today, articles and printables.

As we think about using them, you'll be able to explore some additional professional development resources at the end. As Nydia mentioned, connect with the leader here at the Sesame Street Workshop who oversaw the development and execution of these resources. Before we start, we'll take a quick moment together to catch our breath and think a little bit

more about how you can maybe use this same resource in your work with children or families as they think about being able to bounce back when life throws curve balls or when we might be feeling disappointed or when things don't work out, and we can bounce back together.

[Video begins]

[Music]

Elmo: That's monster meditation with Elmo.

Andy: And me, Andy.

Elmo: Oh, Elmo really wanted to play.

Andy: Hi, Elmo.

Elmo: Oh, it's Elmo's friend Andy. Hello, Andy.

Andy: What's wrong, Elmo? You look disappointed.

Elmo: Well, Elmo was supposed to have a play date with Abby, but she's sick with the sniffles and she can't come out and play.

Andy: Oh, I'm sorry to hear Abby's sick.

Elmo: Elmo too. Elmo, doesn't know what to do.

Andy: I know it can be disappointing when things don't work out the way you planned. I know how that feels.

Elmo: Yeah.

Andy: Hey, how about we do some monster meditation together.

Elmo: Meda the what?

Andy: Meditation. It's an activity to help you when you're feeling really disappointed. First, we'll begin with some belly breaths. Put your hands on your belly. Take a slow deep breath in, and then slowly breathe out. Good job, Elmo.

Now let's do that one more time. Slow deep breath in, and slowly out. Now do you want to play one, two, three, freeze?

Elmo: Oh!

Andy: You're very good at freezing Elmo.

Elmo: [Laughs]

Andy: Now to do one, two, three, freeze, we're going to take three steps and then freeze. When you freeze, look around you and call out what you can see.

Elmo: Elmo is ready. Follow along with Elmo and Mr. Andy. Remember, one, two, three, and freeze.

Andy: OK. So one, two, three, freeze.

Elmo: Oh!

Andy: Now look around. What can you see?

Elmo: Barkley. Hi, Barkley. Elmo didn't see you there.

Andy: Hey, maybe Barkley can join you.

Elmo: Barkley, do you want to play one, two, three, freeze with Elmo?

Barkley: Woof woof.

Andy: Great. Here we go again, one, two, three, freeze.

[Birds chirping]

Elmo: Birdies. They're looking such a pretty sound.

Andy: They do sound wonderful.

Elmo: Bye bye, birdies.

Barkley: Woof.

Andy: I wonder what else you'll see when you take three more big steps, one, two, three, freeze.

Elmo: Oh! Elmo sees Slimy and Oscar.

Oscar: That's my name. Now get lost.

Elmo: Oh, Oscar.

[Laughs]

Andy: Look at all you can see on Sesame Street when we play one, two, three, and freeze.

Elmo: Yeah. Elmo saw Barkley, Birdies, and Oscar.

Oscar: Me?

Elmo: That's right. Now, Elmo knows what he's going to do today.

Andy: What's that?

Elmo: Have a play date with his friends Barkley, Slimy, and Oscar.

Oscar: What? Oh, do you know any grouch meditation Andy? Yuck!

Elmo: [Laughs]

Barkley: Woof.

[Music ends]

[Video ends]

Antonio: All right, you all. As a former Head Start program director and teacher, I found these as great videos to embed at the end of a day, at the beginning of a conversation, also in times when a child might need a quick moment to catch their breath. I'm hoping that regardless of where you are at in your day, if you had a chance to do one of those three things. Let's jump

back into the conversation and think a little bit more about how these resources can meet your need no matter who you're talking to.

When we think about all of the children in this world and specifically in the United States that we meet the needs for and connect with, we know that nearly half of the children in America under the age of 18, that's 35 million children, have been through at least one adverse childhood experience with more than one third of those children under the age of five. But just like you, Sesame Street knows that simple strategies can make a difference in mitigating the effects of some of these traumatic experiences.

And together, we're learning that the more that we can help families, both the children and the adults in their lives take small steps, the more we can increase their chances of successful outcomes in school and in life. It is about helping everyone in the neighborhood build their own resilience as we work to help children thrive and be successful in their world and outside of the classroom.

Sesame Street in Communities or SSIC is this model that uses three components to reach children in communities through channels that we traditionally have not been able to access. This includes an online content hub. This curated collection of the best of our community engagement work created over decades and with new content updated monthly.

It also includes our professional development resources. These can be used to help train staff members like you to better meet the needs of children in your communities through things like webinars, training videos, and courses. Finally, implementation partners like the team at Head Start that enable every one of their members to continue the great work you're doing with just one more tool in your toolbox.

Sesame Street in Communities offers parents, providers, and community organizations shared messaging, shareable content, and simple strategies for the lives of children and their families. Intended to the workshop, Sesame Street in Communities builds on the more than 50-year commitment to serving and learning from families and the staffs that care for them working to build smarter, stronger, kinder kids one relationship at a time. The strategy that we use to reach this goal is to engage everyone in the neighborhood to help in the creation of building resilient families.

As I mentioned earlier, this is the third and final webcast of our three-part series exploring the racial justice resources on the SSIC website. Let's together run through a quick recap of the first two webcasts before jumping into today's conversation.

In webcast one, we reviewed storybooks and workshops that are available on the racial justice topic page to help support children in celebrating themselves on the inside and out. Pictured here is that interactive storybook with the same name.

The storybooks on SSIC are digital texts that can be read aloud or followed on screen. Children can follow the color-coded words being read aloud by a Sesame friend in English or in Spanish while turning the pages of a digital book or cozy up to a caring adult who can read the words out loud for them. In the storybook *Outside, Inside*, we together looked at the ways that West and his father Elijah celebrate themselves, each other and the community that they live in.

Workshops are those bundled packages of resources that the team here at SSIC have found work really well together. In the workshop Remembering What I'm All About, we watched together the video, We Are Somebody and strategized about the best ways to use printables with the work and the teams that you are engaged with.

In last week's webcast number two, we explored two other types of resources, interactive games, and videos. Videos are, of course, what you'd expect and can be easily found on the Sesame Street in Communities website if you look for that small orange icon of a play button in that lower right-hand corner of each of the resources.

Last week, we watched the video Proud of Your Eyes where Sesame Street friends discussed feelings and celebrated themselves after a difficult racist encounter. We also watched one of the documentaries featuring a real family as they talked about the ways that they shared and celebrated their race, culture, and identities with their children.

Finally, we explore the interactive activities on the site. Interactive games are those that can be identified by that small blue icon of a hand, and we'll let you know about these types of resources, including the Let's Talk About Race game that adult-facing resource where grown-ups could choose from five different topics to engage with children in important conversations, thoughts, and actions around racial justice.

We're going to get started. Before we do, we love to play some games here at the Sesame Workshop. We're going to invite you to join us in a little bit of Sesame trivia. Go ahead and let us know using the chat window, which character you think is part of the Sesame Street team, but is the only one who has five fingers on each hand? Let's take a quick minute and use the chat window to let us know your best guess.

Quentin says Bert. Latoya says Elmo. We have Melanie saying the Count. Ashley saying Cookie Monster. We have a couple more people saying Cookie Monster. I see Alma saying Bert.

These are all great guesses you all. But truthfully, the only character that needs all five fingers to grab those big, delicious cookies is your friend and mine, Cookie Monster. He is the only character that we have that has five fingers to hold on to those giant cookies.

Ready for one more quick trivia question. The original Oscar the Grouch was actually not green. Truthfully, he was a different color. Use that chat window and let us know the best guess on what you think the color of his fur was.

Lots of browns, a couple of yellows, a couple of grays, a red or two. Great. I think I saw, Bonnie as one of the first people with the correct answer. He was actually orange in some of those early episodes. You have to dig back into some of our earliest videos through the Sesame Workshop to see when Oscar the Grouch was a little bit brighter than his current green color.

Now you have a sense of the way that we play these games. Some of the fun trivia that you can use to dazzle friends at happy hours, and even in conversations with children and families in your classrooms. Let's take a look now at jumping into the resources connected to our Racial Justice Coming Together initiatives.

On our racial justice topic page, there are over 40 different multimedia resources available. These can be shared with children, with families and with other Head Start staff you work with.

All of our resources are accessible from that main topic page I'll take you to in a few moments. Are also broken into smaller subtopics for more specific topics.

The subtopics on our racial justice page include Dealing with Racism, Talking About Race, and Racial Justice for Military Families, as well as Community Diversity. I discussed already that those interactive games, activities, videos, storybooks, and workshops will be reflected in those previous talks. If you haven't seen them, you can definitely check out the recording. Today we're going to be focusing on our last two on the right set of your screen, printables and articles. Let's take a look at them together.

Articles, highlighted by that small purple icon of a newspaper, are informative texts, usually at a grade school reading level, and with easy to access bulletin information. We found these to be most useful between the adults in a child's life. Thinking of it for maybe you as a staff person working in a Head Start program to a family that is picking up their child at the end of the day or dropping them off in the morning.

Articles, like all of our resources, have a single sentence summary on the top called the big idea that lets people know what the resource is all about. These can be placed on bulletin boards, distributed at workshops and presentations, and even shared, as I said before, at arrival or dismissal. On our Racial Justice topic page, there are seven adult-facing articles, each with information to help families and staff gain a better understanding of what racial justice work looks like in the context of early learning and how to support its development and progression.

Together, let's take a look at one of these resources, the "What Is Literacy?" article. To do that, I'm going to go into [ssic.org](https://www.ssic.org). When I go to the page, I'll be entered just like I had in previous webcast onto this main landing page. I'll have the chance to volley in the upper left-hand corner between English and Spanish as well as between parent caregiver or provider.

Again, just as a reminder, the only difference is that when you first look into provider where we name anyone working professionally with children, you will be taken to a page that has these two additional tabs. One that says Partner Portal that shows some of the work that we are doing on the ground in and across the United States, and then also that Professional Development tab that I love the most that tells you a little bit more about some of those ways that you can use resources to gain even more knowledge to embed in your work with children and families.

Connected to both our parent- and staff-facing pages, we have topics that are A to Z, reflecting those big buckets of support that children might need a little bit of help growing with. These includes big topics like ABCs and 123s that include things like math, science, language, and literacy to get everyone school ready. Difficult Times and Tough Talks, that sort of broad bucket that has to do with lots of different hard to handle or hard to address topics, things like community violence, incarceration, or homelessness. Then our final one, Healthy Bodies and Healthy Minds has to do with those topics that you can see reflected on the screen that have to do with making sure kids are eating things like a rainbow of fruits and vegetables, and also moving their bodies in and around the world.

In today's conversation, like our previous two, we're going to go down to R for racial justice. When you get to the page, like every topic page on Sesame Street in Communities, you are

welcomed with a quick paragraph that gives you a sense of what the page is all about and the option to start, to put it into your own private profile, to upload it onto your own desktop, or to print it out and physically save it for a later time, or to share it with somebody else. All of our topic pages begin with this quick introductory video that is again intended for an adult working with or living with a child and that you can use and helps frame the ways that we've developed concepts connected to this big topic

I mentioned before some of those subtopics to a Racial Justice topic page. If you continue to scroll down, you'll see the wealth of resources in our library connected to all things racial justice each on the bottom right-hand corner with a small icon of what type of resource it is. Again, if you're not quite sure which one to begin with, and you think about who you're working with, you can always use our filter option. Our filter option allows you to pick between the age of the person you're working with, be that child or grown-up, the length of time you have with that person, and even the type of resource that you think they would be most excited about learning from.

As I mentioned before, because we're starting today on articles, I'm going to click down to articles, and I'll show you those seven different ones that pop up. We'll begin with the article, "What Is Racial Literacy?" Just by clicking on the page, it opens up to another window that gives me a big idea of what the article is all about, and then a breakdown of what racial literacy is, that dig deep definition of explaining what it is. You can see here that if you're lost – this from our Racial Justice topic page. It is intended for people working with children ages 0 to 6, and it takes about 1 to 4 minutes to read.

The "What Is Racial Justice?" article kicks off with a review of how we here at Sesame Street in Communities define racial justice and provide some key terms that one might see throughout our topic page. The second part of the article offers some racial literacy strategies for families or staff to use with preschool children by talking to kids about skin color, acknowledging unfair behavior, encouraging and celebrating children's optimism for a better world, and being brave enough to ask questions. This article we found is particularly useful for introducing families and other staff to the racial justice resources on Sesame Street in Communities as it's kind of an overview of the how and the why of the initiative.

As we move to this next slide, consider some of the ways that you might share this resource in the work that you do with children, families, and other staff. Just like before, use the chat window to share with us your tips and tricks so that we can learn from you.

The next article that I wanted to spend some time talking to you about is, again, also on our Racial Justice topic page, and it gives you a better understanding of this idea of being able to raise an upstander. In the work and the conversations that we had with subject matter experts that help to shape the behind the scenes work and the concepts crafted to this page, some of the big ideas that they told us about were to build an understanding and a community of respect.

We need to acknowledge differences and to celebrate them. We also need to understand, be able to define and explain to everyone in the neighborhood how to be an upstander or an ally.

What are the roles that children can do in making sure they're fully seen and that they can be a part of a community where everyone is celebrated?

We're going to take a quick moment and take a look at this page on the article. I'm going to invite you to think about as you take a look at this, what the big idea for this text might be? Let me go back out. I'm going to go to Raising an Upstander. I'm going to make it a little bit bigger, so you all can see.

We'll take a quiet minute's reading. I'm going to invite you to use the chat window after we finish reading these next three or four minutes to let me know what you think on that top the big idea is.

All right, friends. Let's take these next two minutes and see if we can figure out to your best guess what you might think the big idea connected to this article is. I'm going to go ahead and drop the link inside just in case you want to see it for yourself.

Thanks, Bonnie for getting us starting. She said, standing tall, being an upstander, almost talking about the importance of community advocates. What we can do to be upstanders and thinking about Natasha Brown's point, how to be a productive human in a community? By thinking about the ways that we can bring change. Congratulations. You all are right.

The big idea that we have on the top of this page is that upstanders stand up for themselves and for others. That there are lots of ways to develop upstandership in young children. We can begin by modeling it as the adults in children's lives.

Friends, when it comes to implementation, there are several different strategies that folks can utilize with these articles. You may embed them in adult-facing emails or newsletter communications or even post links to the articles on social media. You might even consider placing copies of these in reception areas or on a resource boards and common spaces for other staff, or parents and caregivers to access. Staff can also share them with families and caregivers as conversation starters on ways to talk about and further understandings of racial justice topics for children, and also again be used as the educational reading or engagement materials at trainings that you might be doing in Head Start spaces, workshops, or other meetings.

Just a few of the different ways that I've been able to use these and then I've found a lot of success that other people have shared with me. We have a good sense of what those articles look like and how to potentially use them in your own work and professional development. Let's shift gears into our second type of text, printables.

Printables are these resource documents that are easy to print out and have a small green icon of paper on the bottom right-hand corner of each resource. Everything from coloring pages, card games, resource directories, and even stories to share are just a few of these types of resources. Right now on our Racial Justice topic page, there are currently 11 different types of printable activity pages to use.

The What We Love printable page displayed here is just one example. It can be used in a multitude of ways, and with lots of different audiences: directly with children, sent home with families to complete, during family engagement workshops or events, and even with other staff

members at a professional development training or at different events. In general, these printables can be used as a tool for building relationships in community. Getting to know one another's differences and commonalities are the things that we love and that can help us to develop empathy and respect for one another.

Let's try this activity together. In the chat window, share some of the things that you love. As you do, keep an eye out to see what other people are sharing from this group that might be some of those same things.

That's why I love music as well. It's a great way to get it started. Robie says she loves coffee. I think I'm on cup number three so far. Cathy loves her grandchildren. We see the beach sea turtles from Jennifer and her family. Teresa talked to me about nature and altruism. Andrew talking about plants. I might get some recommendations on how to keep mine alive here. Rhonda loves reading. Jalen talking about crafting a self-care that important way of making sure you're taking time for you to celebrate those things that keep you relaxed and engaged with the world.

Now put some great ideas here that not only speak to who you are, but how you keep and preserve the best parts of yourself to share with your neighborhood and the people around you. Thank you all for keeping these conversations going and putting those recommendations and suggestions in the chat window.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of attending a conference where I was able to share these same resources with regional training and technical assistance staff in real time. While there, we explored together several of the resources that I just showed you from our Racial Justice topic page. Together, we discussed strategies that staff could use to embed these resources in programming. While they were doing that, some of the best suggestions, tips and tricks that I heard were from a table, and so I went over and recorded with my computer and cell phone.

I'm going to show you the video now. I'm apologizing beforehand. I am not a director, I'm not a producer, so it's a little hard to hear. Hopefully, you can find some of the suggestions here fruitful in the work you're doing with children and families as you consider using these resources.

[Video begins]

Person 1: Under these three cases, the one that speaks to me is the Eye on Somebody Giant song. I guess the way I would use that – once again, I would use it in training and have them read it and then have them —from each table read a stanza. Then at the end, we do collect the reading and then possibly ask them how can you incorporate this into what you're doing within the classroom.

You can maybe take one stanza and work on one stanza. How would you do it? And get ideas from them on how they would use it with the children. Then maybe have one team show or reenact how they would use it with the children.

Person 2: This is coming together as a team-building activity, particularly with staff that maybe are new and need to fill out a lot of new tasks. But this is putting two people together or group together, finding out what they love separately, and then what they both love.

Person 3: I think it's also really important to think about the current process that you were talking about before that this is really a parallel process of bringing together a community of educators and then also creating that community within your classroom, and so building those relationship connections and how are children the same and different and still come together and create a community. This certainly a nice way to acknowledge who they are, and then acknowledging who they are within their community.

Person 4: I love this right here. What we know, everybody has something they love. So it would be a good activity for families, it'd be a good activity to staff and for children, especially at the beginning of the school year to bring them together and start building relationships. I love that.

Person 5: I'm thinking about a family event, a family night where parents can do this with their children or networking with other parents.

[Video ends]

Antonio: So I recognize again, it's a little choppy, a little hard to hear, lots of different sounds in the background. But the group sharing out those tips and tricks that they communicate to other staff members about the best ways to use printables was to me a great example that was definitely worth sharing about some of the ways that you could embed this in conversations that parents are having with other parents and families at a workshop that you could thread at the beginning of the year or before a theme to start about what are the things that we love that might be the same or different and to have children use things like the lyrics to the song "Giant" and be able to sing them or to think about what that work or activity looks like in their own life or in their work at school.

As we noted before, many of the printables can be used with almost any audience and staff. You should be able to think about printing these pages and having them available for children to start their day or even that you can pass to families and caregivers to do together. These printables can also be made available for children and share lessons learned so that kids can see themselves reflected in their learning space. Together, you might be able to consider sharing these blank activity pages as take home projects or encourage children and families to complete them and then bring back to school where you can put them up as a bulletin board or use as a conversation starter down your hallways or in shared spaces.

Printable activity pages are also a great activity to be used with adults like we did today. Even though it was virtual, you saw that same big push of energy when people were able to share their tips and tricks that showed collaboration, creativity, and fun. Then finally, just to keep them quick, easy, and accessible, you might even consider printing them off and placing them in a binder, so they're accessible for everyone in your neighborhood and in a pinch just in case you need activity to do or to get everyone grounded in one activity together.

I've been talking a lot. I'm going to take a quick break so that you can give me the answer to your best guess to this trivia question. We know that Big Bird is tall, right? But how tall is he? Use the chat window to let us know your best guess.

Camille says 13 feet. Jerilyn says 8 feet. Sopersola say seven. Let's go. We're given some great suggestions.

Big Bird is actually 8 feet 2 inches. He is a big giant bird. I think, as I mentioned this before, he was used for a lot of different reasons and topic pages. But what we found in research was that for both children and families, his size, his color, and the shape of his body were what children felt safe under, felt connected to, and felt soft enough to hold on to when talking about or experiencing traumatic experiences. Because of that, he became the ambassador that we have for a topic page on traumatic experiences.

Let's take a look at one more question connected to one of Big Bird's friends. That's the only tip that I'll give you. But not many people know that this Muppets first name is Aloysius. But what is his last name? Use your best guess and see if you can come up with Big Bird's good friend whose first name is Aloysius.

We had some good friends here who know. It's always great to see both the spelling and the look of this. It is Snuffleupagus. That is correct. Snuffleupagus is a Big Bird's good best friend. Many people assume that he was imaginary, but truthfully Snuffy is a real character on Sesame Street and best friends with Big Bird.

We're going to jump back into a couple more pieces of information. As Nydia and I mentioned at the top of our hour, we have a special guest coming on the call in about 10 minutes. And so if you have any questions that you would like to share, please pass them our way so that we can get her to talk to us a little bit more about how we built all of the resources that we've been talking about these last three weeks.

Before we do that, I want to spend a minute telling you a little bit about my favorite part of the work at Sesame Street, the professional development that we build. In addition to those topic pages that we found on Sesame Street in Communities, we also have professional development resources that can be found under that Professional Development tab. These resources were created to support providers and early childhood staff in their work with children and families, and are available on a variety of topics and in different formats.

In order to access the professional development resources, you have to view the site in the provider page. I'll show you right now once more how to do it. It never hurts to bother to do a couple of things in practice. I'm going to go to ssic.org. When you scroll over, you see that Professional Development tab, and you have the option of training videos, webinars, courses and interactive trainings, and then events. That's where we're really will be able to access all of these great PDs and courses and webinars that I'm talking about right now.

There are four main types of professional development that we offer: webinars, courses, trainings, and workshops. Webinars are those prerecorded conversations and group walkthroughs of the ways that you can use these assets to meet the needs of children and families in your care. The webinars take between 35 and 45 minutes to watch, and each actually comes with a resource guide and a participation certificate after completing a short quiz.

We also know that staff can gain professional development hours by taking one of those online courses that are self-paced, interactive, and include a variety of resources to use in conversations with children, caregivers, and other staff members. Finally, training videos are

those assets that can help staff instantly level up about a specific topic with tips for talking with families from subject matter experts from a wide variety of fields, settings, and specialties.

Finally, workshops like this one help us all keep that learning alive by exploring the resources in real time with all of you. It's our hope in these interactions to present what we have to share with children, families, and everyone in the neighborhood to make sure that they can see and appreciate all of the work that you are doing to build and keep community.

Connecting to all of the incredible resources on the Racial Justice topic page, we have three different professional development resources on racial justice. The webinar and workshop *Helping Parents Talk About and Stand Up Against Racism* is accessible on our topic page. It's also what we saw last week when you had a chance to view that video and select one of the three 4-minute sections on that side. Both are available in English and in Spanish. The *ABCs of Racial Literacy* is a webinar similar to that one that provides an overview of Sesame Street in Communities and specifically the racial justice resources on that site.

But the main attraction of the racial justice professional development and the resources that we're going to focus on today is the *Room to Grow Resources for Racial Justice* interactive course. While initially developed for staff working with military children and families, this guide is general and can be used across a wide range of types of providers and staff and is designed to promote meaningful conversations with children and families about race, identity, and how we can all help to remember the unique roles that we play in building resilient communities.

We all have similarities and differences that should be honored and celebrated and that staff working to provide that educational groundwork for children, commitment to talking about race and diversity is that critical step towards building a more just and equitable society. It starts with us grown-ups talking about the ways that we can care for young children.

In that *Room to Grow Resources for Racial Justice* interactive guide, we invite staff to explore a self-paced, asynchronous interactive guide with six weeks worth of meaningful resources, each broken down into daily activities to do with everyone in the neighborhood. Day one activities are things that you can do in the classroom with children. This includes information and resources that you can use in your work in early learning spaces.

The day two activities are those that can be embedded and shared between the work that you do, and the communications that you have with the parents. These are resources, again, to share between parents, providers, and caregivers. Day three are those resources that you can send home almost as fun homework. When we say homework, we talk about activities that families can do together to bond.

Day four is professional practice as we think about our own development and growth. These are tools to help us level up our knowledge to race and equity. Finally, the day five activities are thinking about questions and reflections where we try to create a place to process and reflect on each week's lessons, ideas, and resources. As we invite to navigate these lessons, we hope that staff will discover ways to inspire children's curiosity and wonder by thinking about the roles that you will play and that we play together in addressing race and racism, in drawing upon the strengths of families and exploring the ways to model kindness with communities.

Friends, as we wrap up this final webinar in our three-part series exploring racial justice resources, I hope you've gained some inspiration and confidence to incorporate these multimedia tools into the work that you do with staff, with other families, and with programs across the United States to use with children and everyone in the neighborhood. You can see [here](#), based on color-coding the different breakdowns of the resources available on the racial justice topic pages that we each talked about and that you all suggested great ways to embed into your work with easy tips, tricks, and techniques.

Now to give us a closer behind the scenes look of some of the concepts that led to the creation that we've talked about in these webcasts, please welcome to our conversation Rocio Galarza, my boss, and the vice president of content design for the US social impact team here at the Sesame Workshop. Rocio before we get started, tell us a little bit about your work here and maybe even start with your favorite Muppet.

Rocio Galarza: Hello. I apologize because I'm really cold, so I have a hoodie that is Cookie Monster inspired. My name is Rocio Galarza. My favorite Muppet is Rosita because she speaks Spanish and I do too.

When I came when I moved from Puerto Rico to New York one time, I was very, very homesick. I turned on the TV and of course, there is Sesame Street, and Rosita is talking about homesickness as well. I was in my 20's. But I was forever a fan of Rosita after that. Yes, so that's what I love about Sesame Street, that it doesn't matter your age, you can connect with these characters, and that there's this multi-generational connection that we all have with them.

Antonio: Awesome. Actually before we start, I want to remind friends that while we're talking should feel free to use the chat window to share any questions you want Rocio to be able to share and give you some sort of suggestions, thoughts, or behind the scenes information on. But Rocio we've been talking in both this webcast and in the previous two about the ways that people might think about embedding these resources into the work and the play that they do with children and families. Can you share with us a little bit more about how you think about the ideas of respect really support positive relationships with children and families?

Rocio: When we started this work, we actually had to come up with a definition of what we think respect is, and the definition actually was treat others the way that they want to be treated. Of course, that is a big definition. That is a goal. We had to break down what does that mean in terms of how children can learn towards that goal.

Of course, the definition means, first and foremost, that they need to be self-aware, that they need to be cognizant of all the things that they are and celebrate all the things that they are. Understanding that they have some values, that they have things that they love that they like, things that they share with others, and really start building that sense of identity that covers what is outside but also covers what's inside.

Then also, of course, taking all of that knowledge, understanding that in order for me to get to respect I need to get in there, and I need to understand what the other person is, what they like, what they don't like, what they bring with them or they give, what they prefer to not give. I think that that's where we started then talking about the relationship part of it. What does a positive relationship look like in that sense?

Where we landed on was that a positive relationship came when we understood the things of the points of connection, first, which are usually the similarities or the things that we share. The points of learning, which are those things that are different from one another. Like we don't meet eye-to-eye, but we still are curious and want to learn about how do we make, how do we learn from your perspective, learn from you from your experience.

Then there are some points where it is a conflict that we might say, you know what we have to agree to disagree. There are some moments where children have to like, you know what this is what I think, this is what you think, but it's OK for these two realities to live together and not build on that conflict or problems. That being part of a solution.

That is what positive relationships mean. That's what we're working towards with kids is that first – but the first part is incredibly important. And research says that the first part is incredibly important, the identity section of it like the knowing myself, the knowing how to express myself, what triggers certain emotions.

All of that is so important because if you're comfortable in your skin, if you have power in your skin, and in here we are talking about quite literally sometimes, then you are much more open to learn from others and much more open to actually reach out and wanting to have a relationship with others, which, again, that definition of respect really does require us to want to reach out and learn from others.

Antonio: Great. Rocio, you've talked so much about all of this work is based not only in community and the importance of community, but in connection and in understanding and building opportunities to talk about the ways that we are different and the ways that we are the same, and using people's understandings of themselves. When we talk about the definition of respect, not my assumption of who you are. But you telling me and me understanding that through your eyes through your words and through your lens.

Rocio: Absolutely.

Antonio: A question that we have here is that these resources are so well thought out and developed, and people are wondering about how we're reaching out or casting a wide net to support those not linked to bigger systems like Head Start?

Rocio: We do have, of course, the partners that help us reach out. But as you said that there are the partners with their members. That's one net. Then there's the general public.

Now for years, these resources have been around now for a while. But for years, we've been reaching out to the general public. And every time that we've had a new set of resources, we've actually had all sorts of engagement, public engagement related to those resources really getting out the messages and why those resources have been launched.

For example, we started with resources that were a lot more general. By general I mean, again, identity, a lot of kindness. Then little by little we've been launching more resources that perhaps get at more of the areas of learning, how do we turn some of the conflict or the problems that may arise with people thinking different ways, having different perspectives, and treating each other sometimes like, Oh my goodness, this is not the way that you want it to be treated, and realizing it in the moment. We have some of those resources. Again, we reach out

to the general public to help them understand what are some of the strategies that we have related to racial literacy in those moments.

I can tell you as a parent, I had a lot of aha moments when we're talking with advisors. Because my reaction every time there's a conflict – it doesn't necessarily have to be racial justice related. But there was a conflict between kids I was like, Oh my goodness, and I didn't know what to do with the kids and my children, meaning.

I think that what was so helpful is that advisors gave us language, questions that can be asked in those moments that it takes it from "Oh this is a moment of conflict" to "Oh let me understand." Let me understand where the kid is coming from. Let me understand how we can talk through what's going on and maybe have aha moments. From this oops, turn them into aha moments with the kids.

Antonio: Great. Rocio, just a few more minutes with you. For people that have been on this call that have had many different positions that are often many different things to people and children in Head Start settings, is there in your eyes either a favorite resource that you like using or that you think might be a good one to start with if you're not quite sure or if you're shifting positions maybe from inside a classroom to supporting as a manager to families or communities outside the classroom? What do you like the most or what has been the most exciting for you to unveil as part of this?

Rocio: Well, we've unveiled so many different resources. I think that this is what I would suggest because there is a lot, and it can be a little overwhelming. I do like the idea of sitting down. Instead of going into the subtopics that we have within the website, just looking at the activities that we have in the second part of the fold when you look at the website and just clicking around titles that you think will be fun. Then start there and explore it from that perspective.

If when you click on something, this is something that will be fun for me to explore, try yourself. If there's a printable, what will that hard printable that you saw in the video – what would it look like when you fill it out? Then from there, choose one or two of the either printables or the videos that will then serve as a starting point or an introduction to a topic with your kids or with your families.

It has to come from a point, I think. Because there are so many materials there, and you know your programs best. You know the families that you serve best. It has to start from a point of like, where you know, where you decide this is a good starting point for them because of the experiences that I know they have.

The only way to do that is to play around. Probably the only person that would tell you to click around and see what feels right. But it is a feeling. It's a gut feeling. You know your families and your children best, so it has to be from that perspective first.

Antonio: Great. Rocio, I have one more question for you. This is, how do you suggest navigating around a family where children are receptive to videos talking about race and identity, but parents may not be?

Rocio: Well, yes. We are all coming from a different point of view and a different place. That is part of the lifelong journey that we all have to go through in order to understand better who we are, and also who we are and how we become upstander in our situations.

So I think that what is most important here is ... The first step is actually the question, is part of the question. You know that the kids are in a different position than the parents are. Just having awareness of that is the first step. Understanding that that's the case and respecting that that's the case is that the first step.

Then afterwards, try thinking about if the word upstander, if the explanation of the word upstander is it might feel like a stretch for some of the families. Then start with kindness, start with the experiences that children might be showing in the classroom to give them an example of the things that they're doing and how their children are really learning and being better, growing and being a better part of themselves when they're part of those situations. I think that that's really important.

Kindness as a concept is usually one that – and from a research perspective, I can tell you it's usually one that has support all throughout when you talk about kindness and true kindness. This is not niceness, but true kindness of wanting to help others. There is usually a much more of an acceptance of the concept and in a good place to start with families.

Antonio: Awesome. Rocio, we have to cut this a little short as we wind down today. Thank you for making time today to talk, to share with us some behind the scenes information and some brilliant guidance on the best ways to integrate this into the fold of programming and play and work that our staffs are doing with children and families across neighborhoods in the United States.

Rocio: Thank you. Thank you everyone.

Antonio: Friends, as we start to wind down today's conversation, I want to thank you for joining us and participating not only in this webinar, but for those of you that have joined us in the previous two from being part of the party since the early part of September.

Since we're so aware of the different moving pieces that you are in charge of and have to be aware of, a couple of different things that are gentle reminders to help keep you engaged in this work are to one, first, consider exploring the site. Just by clicking into ssic.org, org you can dive a little bit deeper into those racial justice topics and resources we've discussed today and see those wide array of other topics that we have included.

To Rocio's point, just take a look at the page. Let it wash over you. Think about those things you'd be excited about exploring, and then click into them, and think about how you'd be exploring them with other people.

We might also encourage you to make a profile. Because when you make a profile, you create your own library of personalized resources customized to meet your needs. As you then explore the pages and find meaningful resources, you can simply just store them and archive them into your library for later use.

Finally, just consider finding one resource that fits. Think about the children, the families, and other staff work with that may be referencing these resources and the ways they like to learn.

While one child might understand a lesson through an interactive storybook, another may remember a song to remember the right way to stand up for themselves or their friends. More importantly, you know these resources, and the best ways to communicate them to children and to families in your care.

We understand that positive social and emotional development and learning in the early years provides an important foundation for lifelong learning and development, including mental health. Building social-emotional learning every day starts with relationships and supportive learning environments that you've given and created. Once in place, all children can learn social skills like friendship, emotional literacy, self-regulation, and problem-solving. Just by teaching social skills and fostering emotional literacy, you can also prevent behaviors that can become challenging to adults.

As we wind down today's conversation, I want to thank you for welcoming us into the fold of programming, into the fold of dialogue, into the fold of fun that you've been able to create for us. For these last three weeks, we've slowly walked through every single type of asset in the Sesame Street in Communities topic page on racial justice and collaborated with you on the exploration and the conversation on the ways to embed this into the work that you are doing with children and families in Head Start programs across the United States. As integral players in the neighborhoods you learn and live in, please make sure to stay connected to us and your friends on Sesame Street with regular visits to ssic.org where new content is updated regularly.

On behalf of your friends in Sesame Street, my name is Antonio Freitas. I look forward to stay connected with you all, and have a great rest of the day. From there, pass it back to Nydia.

Nydia: Thank you. Thank you again so much to our presenter Antonio Freitas for his presentation over the last three webinars in this series, and as well to Rocio Galarza for her appearance today. If you all have any more questions, feel free to go to MyPeers or you can write to health@ecetta.info.

The evaluation URL, it will appear when the webinar ends, so be sure that you do not close the Zoom platform, or you will not see the evaluation pop up. Remember that after submitting the evaluation, you will see a new URL. This link will allow you to access, download, save and print your certificates. You can subscribe to our monthly list of resources using this URL. You can find our resources in the health section of the ECLKC or write us at health@ecetta.info.

Thank you again to Antonio, Rocio. Thank you everyone backstage. Thank you all for your participation today. You can close the Zoom platform.