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Dear families,

I wanted to share with you a few things that have been coming up for families this past week.

First, during our weekly family chat, one family spoke about the fact that since children are now rarely around other children one thing that's been coming up is that kids are getting used to getting their way much of the time. Perhaps this is not as true for younger siblings who still have people who will beat them at board games, etc. but for many children I suspect, we've seen an increase in meltdowns when they don't get their way.

I want to let everyone know that this behavior is not forever. Much of the behavior is from regression during these stressful times. Another way to look at it is that children's development is not nice and neat and linear. I find it is much more cyclical.

When I see a child working really hard at learning a new skill--beginning to write words on their own or mastering the monkey bars--most of their energy is placed into learning this new thing and it means that other things might seem like they are regressing. In fact, it's more because everything else is put on pause so they can practice and develop this new thing. Eventually, things will come into balance again, only to be shifted out of balance with the next big skill. Picture the shape of a slinky when thinking about development instead of a line!

Next, a family reached out to me about how to talk about police with their children. I'm sure many of us are thinking about these conversations as protests against police brutality and in support of Black lives continue across the world.

When talking about police, I think it's important for the adults to know and understand the history of police in America and to hold that context, though of course too sophisticated for young children, but it will help talk about some of the more nuanced things. I'm adding some articles that give a brief history.

Adults should know that policing began for economic purposes--to patrol slaves, to police Natives and "protect" settlers, and to police labor-union organizers. Policing all of these groups would ensure that America could make money, and that money would only really be distributed to a small portion of white men and their families.

When talking with young children about the police, you might say something that "Many people say the police are here to protect people and keep us safe. The whole system of policing, though, was started to make sure only some people were safe and that they could continue making money. Let's think of other people in our community that help keep us safe--the grown-ups in your family, your teachers, nurses and doctors, bus and train drivers, and garbage collectors." You might want to brainstorm a list of community workers and brainstorm ways they keep us safe.

You might talk about how right now people are angry that police have been killing black and brown people and they are protesting to make their voices heard.

Avoid the narrative "not all cops are bad." This is less about individuals and more about the system that is rooted in racism and continues to oppress Black people. The police system allows Black people to be killed at disproportionately higher rates than any other group without any consequences.

You might talk to your child about complicity. You can frame it in different ways but an example would be your child is playing in a playground when another child is mean to someone else. Ask, Would you say something to that child? What would it look like if no one said anything to the child saying mean things? Would they continue or stop by themselves? What would happen if all the grown-ups, who are supposed to keep you safe, watched the child say something mean and didn't do anything? Would you feel safe? What would it be like if you were the child that was being treated meanly? What would you want your friends to do? What would you want a grown-up to do? What are the things you can do to make sure people feel safe?

Here are the articles:

[The racist roots of American policing](https://theconversation.com/the-racist-roots-of-american-policing-from-slave-patrols-to-traffic-stops-112816)

[How the U.S. got its police force](https://theconversation.com/the-racist-roots-of-american-policing-from-slave-patrols-to-traffic-stops-112816)

[The history of police in creating social order in the U.S.](https://www.npr.org/2020/06/05/871083599/the-history-of-police-in-creating-social-order-in-the-u-s)

Also, another resource for talking with kids about racism:

[21 anti-racism videos to share with kids](https://www.weareteachers.com/anti-racism-videos/)

With love,

Erin