

## Everyday Feminism articles:

- Want to Be a Feminist Parent?: 4 Goals to Consider
- 4 Ways Queer And Trans Parents Are Raising Revolutionary Children During The Trump Era
- 9 Intersectional Parenting Tips for Parenting With Privilege
- Parenting After Your Own Childhood Trauma Isn't Easy – But These 3 Tips Might Help
- 5 Myths About Gender-Neutral Parenting
- On Parenting and Rape Culture

## Books:

- Revolutionary Mothering, by Alexis Pauline Gumbs
- Don't Leave Your Friends Behind: Concrete Ways To Support Families in Social Justice, edited by Victoria Law and China Martens
- Rad Families: A Celebration, edited by Tomas Moniz
- A Queer Parent's Primer by Stephanie A. Brill

## Social media groups to join and accounts to follow:

### *Facebook groups:*

- Books for Littles
- Mamis Unite!
- Queer Parents
- Queer Parents of Color
- Intersectional Feminist/Social Justice Oriented Parents
- POC Feminist Parenting Group
- Feminist, Parents, Caretakers and Friends

### *Instagram accounts:*

- @raisinginclusivekids
- @hereweread

## Podcasts:

- Conscious Parenting for Confident and Successful Kids
- Parenting for Liberation

## Books on race:

All The Colors We Are By Kate Kissinger

The Skin You Live In by David Lee Csicsko and Michael Tyler

Skin We Are In by Sindiwe Magona and Nina G. Jablonski

*\*\* for books about kids of different races and ethnicities and their experiences, see booklists on [socialjusticebooks.org](http://socialjusticebooks.org)*

## Books on gender:

The Gender Wheel by Maya Gonzalez

They She He Me by Maya + Matthew

Julián is a Mermaid by Jessica Love

Thunder Rose by Jerdine Nolan

One of a Kind, Like Me/Único Como Yo

I Love My Purse by Belle DeMont

Neither by Airlie Anderson

## Books on sex and bodies:

- What Makes A Baby by Cory Silverberg
- Sex Is A Funny Word by Cory Silverberg
- Celebrate Your Body by Sonya Rene Taylor

## Other good books:

- Calm Down Time by Elizabeth Verdick: available in English and Spanish; recommended for young kids learning to regulate behavior and use belly breaths
- The Day You Begin by Jaqueline Woodson: available in English and Spanish; picture book VERY highly recommended as an introduction to all the things— touches on race, privilege, ableism, xenophobia, classism

*\*\* booklists for older children and teens available on [socialjusticebooks.org](http://socialjusticebooks.org).*

These exercises are designed to show you why it is so important to stay grounded as a parent and also how important it is to make sure that the reactions we have stored in our muscle memory aren't harmful ones for us or our kids.

1. Crumple up a piece of paper. With a partner, stand face each other and space yourselves out maybe three or four feet. Your partner will throw the crumpled up paper at you. Do not catch the paper. Instruct them to ask your permission before throwing. How did you react? Take notice of your body when the paper was thrown. Did you flinch? Did your arms cover your face defensively? Did you swat the paper away? We know that a crumpled up piece of paper isn't going to hurt us, but our body reacts automatically without us having to think about it. This is helpful from an evolutionary standpoint but not so much when trying to parent children intentionally.

2. Now take a deep breath. If you have a practice that you use to ground you, do it now. Let your partner know when you are ready and then tell them to ask for your permission to throw the paper ball again. How was your reaction this time? Did your body react in the same way?

Good or bad, we carry with us all the ways that we were parented as kids. We have to be vigilant about undoing all the things that we don't want to keep or they will continue to show up unexpectedly and undermine all the work you're doing with your kids.

### 3 Breathing Exercises To Do With Your Kid

Teaching kids to breathe provides them with a simple but effective strategy for slowing down, both mentally and physically, helping them to take notice of how they're feeling and to relax or calm down in the face of overwhelming emotions.

#### Belly Breaths

1. Hold up a book or a piece of paper and tell your child you're going to be talking two really big, deep breaths.
2. Ask your child to breathe in through their nose like they're smelling something good while you trace your finger from one corner of the book to another.
3. Once you reach the second corner, instruct your child to blow all the air out slowly through their mouth like they're blowing bubbles.

*\*\* practice taking deep breaths with toddlers with a pinwheel, and older kids with a stuffed animal on their belly while they're lying down*

#### Body Scan

*This exercise is helpful to teach children to become more in tune with what they're feeling. Keep this exercise short but give your kid long enough to actually focus in on how they're feeling.*

1. Ask your child to sit or lay down. Preferably lay down but it will work while sitting also.
2. Guide them through belly breaths. They do not have to be as deep but remind them to breathe in the same way, in through the nose out through the mouth, throughout the exercise

3. Start at their toes. Ask them to notice their toes. How do your toes feel? Can you feel each toe? The space between your toes? Wiggle them around and try again. Work your way up the body. Whatever is happening in your child's body, ask them to rest their attention there.
4. End with a few deep breaths and ask your child how they are feeling. Are they feeling more tense or more relaxed?

### **Squish and Let Go**

1. Ask your child to lay down or sit.
2. Guide your child through deep breaths in through their nose and out through their mouth.
3. Ask your child to focus on their face and squish all the muscles in their face as tightly as they can: furrow your eyebrows, shut your eyes as tightly as you can, squeeze your lips together, crunch up your nose. Hold it while you count to 2.
4. Release- let all your muscles go soft again. Take a deep breath. Ask them how their face feels. How did it feel when it was all scrunched up?
5. Instruct them that they're going to do that with all their muscles. Work your way down asking the same questions.
6. End with a deep breath. Ask if they feel more relaxed for or more tense. You can also ask if there were places where they didn't notice they were already tense.

## 2 Writing Exercises for Self-Reflection for Caregivers:

### 1. Checking In With Your Intention.

Before teaching empathy, the first step is to be able to name your feelings and get into the practice of teaching your kid to name theirs. Here's a helpful exercise:

1. Bring to mind something you did or did not do, something you said or did not say. If you have difficulty doing this, try recalling something specific you did that involves:

- The use of force
- Offering someone “negative feedback” or “constructive criticism”
- Agreeing to do something someone asks of you
- Saying no to someone
- “Being good,” “being nice”
- Telling a joke, “being funny,” saying something humorous

2. Describe on paper what you did or said, and state the intention behind it.

3. Now, reflect on whether there were deeper layers of intention beneath the one just named. If so, write down whatever you discover.

4. When you became aware of an intention, did you want to change your intention? Did you want to change your action? Write down any thoughts or feelings that come to mind as you ask yourself these questions.

## 2. Self-Empathy & Sharing Feelings.

Here's another one that helps on building empathy:

Step 1. Think about a situation or conflict with someone in your life that you are not happy with. Note: It is best if it is a problem that is happening in your life now.

Step 2. Create one sentence that describes that situation and your feeling related to it. For example, if the conflict is with a partner: "You never listen to me and it makes me feel sad."

Step 3. Sit down and close your eyes and repeat this sentence to yourself 10 times. Note: It can be in your mind (not out loud!) if you like. While you are doing this, notice what is happening in your body and how you are feeling, what changes if anything. Short feedback with yourself: What did you notice happening in your body? Were you relaxed or tense? Were you breathing normally, breathing shorter, or faster or slower?

Step 4. Change your sentence so it reflects the positive version of the situation that you want to see. For example, "I love it when you listen to me."

Step 5. Close your eyes and repeat this sentence to yourself 10 times and notice what happens in your body. Short feedback with yourself: What did you notice? What is happening? What happened to your breathing? Do you see the difference? If there is a difference, why do you think it is?

## Examples of Giving Self-Empathy With Your Kid/s:

Instead of: "I just can't get her to do anything I say. I'm such an ineffective parent."

**Try: "When I remember that Casey said they would do the washing up and now I see that they have not done it, I feel frustrated because I'm really needing support, and exhausted because I need some rest."**

Instead of: "They are such a monster."

**Try: "When I hear them say to me, "shut up mom," I feel resentful because I really value respect."**



## Examples of Offering Empathy With Your Kid/s:

Instead of: "If you just sit there and don't join in, we're going home."

**Try: "Are you feeling a bit nervous about playing with the others, and wanting some help? Would you like me to come over there with you?"**

Instead of: "Stop crying now, we can come to the park another day."

**Try: "Are you feeling sad that we're leaving because you really enjoyed playing today? Would you like to come to the park tomorrow?"**



## Examples of Expressing Ourselves Using Observations, Feelings, Needs and Requests With Your Kid/s:

Instead of: "This place is a pigsty. How can you live in this mess?"

**Try: "When I see your clothes lying on the floor I feel jittery because I love order. Would you be willing to pick your clothes up and put them away by the end of today?"**

Instead of: "You are so patient and well-behaved, Simon."

**Try: "When I remember that you played quietly whilst Tia Trisha was here, Simon, I feel really grateful because I appreciate helping each other."**



*\*\*These exercises and examples were compiled and adapted from A Queer Parent's Primer by Stephanie A. Brill, FishBowl Youth, The Heart of Parenting by Marion Badenoch Rose and "Nonviolent Communication: a Language of Life" by Marshall B. Rosenberg.*

# A Helpful Vocabulary List To Help Guide Conversations:

**Allies:** The people who support those who are not being treated fairly.

**Authority:** A special job or something about them that makes someone's voice seem more important than others'.

**Autonomy:** Having control of your own body

**Belly Breaths:** Deep breathing from our bellies. When our brain notices that we are breathing slowly and deeply it sends hormones, or chemicals, to our body to help calm us down.

**Capitalism:** A way of deciding who gets which and how many resources (food, money, shelter, land).

**Colorism:** The unfair belief that the lighter a person's skin tone is, the more beautiful/smart/capable a person is.

**Conform:** Having to be like everybody else, no matter how different you feel.

**Oppression:** Unjust treatment or control of a group of people over a long time.

**Patriarchy:** The unfair belief that boy's voices and bodies matter more than others'.

**Privilege:** A person having identities that some people believe make them more important than other people.

**Racism:** The unfair belief that some voices and bodies matter more than others' based on the color of their skin.

**Resilience:** The ability of people to be able to recover, or feel better, when something hurtful or difficult happens to them.

**Self-Care:** People doing things that help them to feel better and stay healthy

**Social Justice:** The process of noticing what is not fair in society and creatively working to change it.

**Solidarity:** The act of supporting other people (especially those who are not being treated fairly).

**White Supremacy:** The unfair system that believes white people's voices and bodies matter more than others'.

## **GENDER**

**Cisgender:** When your gender identity (how you feel) is the same as what doctors/midwives assigned to you when you were born (girl/boy or sex assigned at birth).

**Gender:** How you feel. Your internal sense of being a girl, boy, both or neither.

**Gender Binary:** A way of seeing gender as two opposite groups—girl and boy. This idea doesn't include all the ways we can have a gender identity and express our gender.

**Gender Expansive:** People who live their lives showing that there are many ways to be a girl, boy, both or neither.

**Gender Identity:** How you feel. Girl, boy, both or neither. Everyone has a gender identity.

**Non-Binary:** People who do not feel like the words "girl" or "boy" fits. They may feel like a mixture of both or neither. They sometimes use pronouns such as they, them, theirs or make their own pronouns.

**Sex Assigned At Birth:** When a baby is born, a doctor or midwife looks at the baby's body/anatomy and says they are a boy, girl or intersex.

**Transgender or Trans:** When your gender identity (how you feel) is different than what doctors/midwives assigned to you when you were born (girl/boy or sex assigned at birth).

## **WHO YOU LOVE**

**Bisexual:** *People who love, or are attracted to, people of two genders.*

**Gay:** *People who love, or are attracted to, people of the same gender.*

**Heterosexual:** *Men who love, or are attracted to, women and women who love, or are attracted to, men.*

**Lesbian:** *Women who love, or are attracted to, other women.*

**Sexual Orientation:** *Who you love, or are attracted to.*

**Queer:** *People who love, or are attracted to, people of all or many gender identities.*