# Twitter Thread by Celeste Headlee



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**Most think the youngest age it's appropriate to talk about race is age 5 or so, as they are ready to start kindergarten. This is too late.**
**A short thread.**

We have years and years of research on children and their recognition of race. We know that 3-month-old babies already show preferences for faces that reflect specific racial groups.

By 9 months, children begin to categorize faces by perceived race-- this person is White, this person is Black. And by 3 years old, they are already associating Black faces with negative traits.

By age 4, a year before most people think it's appropriate to talk to kids about race, children already link White people with higher status and wealth.

By the time kids enter elementary school, researchers find that race-based discrimination is everywhere. Just as parents are beginning to have conversations about race, their children are already stereotyping others because of their color.

We all believe that children don't see race, but that's incorrect. They do. Race is the water in which we all swim, including our kids. It's not that "you've got to be taught", as Oscar Hammerstein wrote. The world teaches our kids to be racist; they've got to be UNtaught.

Don't wait to talk about race until your children have already absorbed racism through their pores and the air they breathe. Sing anti-racism to them in their lullabies. Recite love for all people over cereal. Chant equality while they're playing.

Don't fall back on bad responses like - "that's not polite to talk about." It's the height of impoliteness to NOT talk about it and allow your kid to grow up believing that race is real and racism is justified.

Don't say "skin color doesn't matter" because before your child is a year old, they already know that's a lie. Skin color SHOULDN'T matter and it's unjust that it does. That's what you should tell them.

Black parents don't wait to talk with their kids about race because a Black child's life depends on knowing the dangers of our racist society. Please don't wait to talk to your child so you and they can be part of an anti-racist future.

Done.