

5.18 What Do I Do When Asked to Leave Anti-Racism at Home?

Tue, 4/12 4:41PM 16:04

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

jasmine, anti racism, daycare, conversations, anti racist, question, kiddos, school, fan favorites, starting, book, feel, host, season, unfairness, home, first name basis, parent, racism, zeroed

SPEAKERS

Jasmine Bradshaw

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:00
You're listening to the First Name Basis podcast, Season Five, Episode 18: "What Do I Do When My Child's School Says to Leave Anti-Racism at Home?"

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:17
Teaching our children to be inclusive and anti-racist starts with us within the sacred walls of our home. First Name Basis is designed to empower you with the confidence you need to be a leader in your family and a change maker in your community. Together, we will wrestle with hard questions and use the answers to create the world we want: a world that reflects our values of inclusion, compassion, and courage. I'm your host, Jasmine Bradshaw, and I am so excited to be on this journey with you.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 00:53
Hello, First Name Basis fam. I am so glad you are here. Y'all. I forgot to tell you last week that it was the season finale of Season Five! I totally spaced it last week, I was so zeroed in on Ally Elementary and Ally Elementary Jr. "we had the best time opening enrollment; it is now closed, and we have already started. Last night we had our very first Q & A" but I was so zeroed in on all of that, that I totally forgot to tell you that it was supposed to be the last episode on the season. I'm like, "People are gonna be like, 'Oh, where did she go? Why don't we have any new episodes?'" That is because Season Five is now over.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 01:36
So we are taking a break to get ready for Season Six. And to get ready for some really exciting programs and projects that we have coming up next season and over the summer. But we will

be back on May 10. So the very first episode of Season Six will start on May 10. I'm really excited because it's called "Racism is a Big Fat Lie," and I actually have a two-part series that I've been waiting to make for you, since... Oh man, it's been a long time. I had this idea during Season Four, so it's been quite a while that I wanted to make these episodes, and it just never was the right time. So it's coming up in Season Sixâ€”"Racism is a Big Fat Lie, Part One" on May 10 of 2022.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 02:20

So today's episode is actually an Ask Jasmine question. So if you're not sure what that is, we have an email list called Fam Favorites, because you're my First Name Basis "Fam," and every week, I send out my favorites from the week. So it will be my favorite quote from the episode, my favorite resource that I use to make the episode or something that a guest suggested that we look into. And usually I'll do an Ask Jasmine question. Sometimes we do frequently asked questions about our different programs. But other times I choose a question from the community that I've heard from all of you. And then I answer it in like a mini podcast episode. So usually the only way to get access to Ask Jasmine is if you join our Fam Favorites. And you can join that by going to firstnamebasis.org/fam, F-A-M. Just type in your name your email, and you'll start getting Fam Favorites sent right to your inbox.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 03:11

But this question is so fantastic. And I think a lot of you are probably experiencing the same thing. So I wanted to have a permanent place on the podcast feed. So today we are talking about what to do when your child's school says to leave antiracism at home. So I'm going to just play the Ask Jasmine for you so that you can get a sense of what it's like to receive an Ask Jasmine in your inbox, and if you're interested you can join Fam Favorites. All right, here we go!

J Jasmine Bradshaw 03:40

Hello, First Name Basis fam, and welcome to Ask Jasmine. Our question today is, "What do I do when my child's school says to leave antiracism at home?" Now that was not exactly the question word-for-word, but I wanted you to have a simplified version so that you knew what we're talking about today during Ask Jasmine. I want to start by reading you the message that I got from the parent who had the question, so that you can get the context for the whole situation. Now this is very specific to this person and their daycare, but I think that you'll notice some parallels between the school that they take their kiddos to, or the school that your children attend, or maybe just a school in your area.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 04:26

So this parent says, "Hi, Jasmine. I recently had a run-in with my child's daycare when they banned the book "Anti-Racist Baby" after my daughter took it to school to be read to the classroom. I had no knowledge that this would be its purpose and simply thought she was taking a book to peruse at naptime. She came home and told me that her teacher changed "anti-racist" to "kind" and "racist" to "unkind." I didn't think that was appropriate or acceptable.

A few days later, the director called me to say that although she is sensitive to the subject matter, and understands and agrees with it, it is not something that the daycare is comfortable with my daughter bringing in. They ask that I no longer send in the book as it is too much of a liability. They don't feel it's their responsibility to broach the word "racist" or "racism" and feel it should be an at home discussion. In hindsight, I feel like there's more to be done here. It just doesn't feel right, that a book can be banned from a daycare. Not only that, I told the director, 'I'm confused what books she can bring in.' I asked for our criteria of books that are acceptable, and I have yet to receive one. I wanted to mention that I embarked on this anti-racism journey early, because my daughter starts kindergarten in the fall. One of the schools in her school system had a racist act happen, and it sparked me to start this conversation early to prepare her for the world. And then for the daycare to say 'leave your racism convos at home,' it just had me feeling really miffed."

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:02

All right. So that's the backstory, and it's such a fantastic question, and I do not blame you for feeling really miffed, because I would feel super miffed as well. To start, I just want to say that I'm really sorry that that happened. And I'm really excited that you're bringing this up with your daughter's school, because even though it's off to a rocky start, it's starting. So that's a good thing. And you're absolutely right that it is not appropriate or effective to replace the words "racist" and "anti-racist" with "kind" and "unkind," because those are completely different things. And I think that is one of the biggest misconceptions when it comes to anti-racism, that if we are just kind, it will go away, and it takes away the fact that there is unfairness built into the systems that we're all living and working and existing under.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 06:53

So you're totally right, that it's not appropriate to change those words. You're also totally right that starting this conversation early is the way to go. Daycare is actually the perfect place to begin these conversations about identity and allyship, because the kiddos are already noticing differences, are already commenting on them, and they're already showing signs of racial prejudice and other types of prejudice too. I mean, we've talked about it many times before, but I have to repeat that before our kiddos are even in preschool, they have often internalized racist stereotypes. So daycare really is a good place for this conversation, and it should be taking place at these early stages. But it sounds like they're not ready for the race and racism conversation quite yet. And if you remember, from a couple of weeks ago, in Season Five, Episode 16, I talked about age appropriate anti-racism, and I explained that when we're talking to young children, we need to start by helping them learn about and build confidence in themselves, and then move on to becoming comfortable with differences in others. From there, we start to talk about fairness and unfairness, and that's really when we get into the idea of race and racism. But when we're first starting out, we have to start with identity development, and then differences.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:12

So I say all of this to say that maybe "Anti-Racist Baby" might not be the starting place for your child's preschool, but maybe it could be a goal that you're working towards. So they are not ready to have that book in their school quite yet. And if the adults aren't ready to host these

conversations, they can actually do some damage to the kiddos in the process, so we don't want to force that. What we should do is start by forming a partnership with the school and helping them see that their end goals really align with anti-racism.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 08:46

Now my advice for how you should move forward is going to differ based on your privilege. So if you are a person who holds white privilege, or if you are a person of color, who has proximity to power, you already know that you have a big responsibility here. If you are a parent who is Black, I want you to take a minute and think about how you would feel most taken care of. You have to take care of yourself. You can't pour from an empty cup, so even though this is a really, really important topic for you to help tackle, if you don't have the capacity right now, that is okay. But if you are someone who holds different amounts of privilege, you have proximity to power and you know that it is within your responsibility to take some action, I would encourage you to listen up.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 09:32

So the first thing that I would do is think about the other parents at your school. Are there other parents who you could partner with? Are there other people who are committed to allyship and anti-racism who would work with you to bring this issue to the school? And then from there, I would work with that parent or if you have a partner in your family that you can bring on to help you with this issue, I would go to the school together and I would really help them see that you are on the same team. You both want the same things for the children in the school and that is for kids to thrive. Then I would dig into what does that look like? What does it really look like for our kiddos to thrive? That means that everyone needs to feel included, everyone needs to feel safe, everyone needs to feel respected, and they need to begin to understand their unique strengths. They need to know who they are in the context of this world and in their school and in their family. And then they need to be equipped with the tools to speak up or take action when they see that unfairness is happening to their friends or to other people at school. So that is a long journey that you can go on together. From there—“from that point of understanding that we have the same goals—“that's when you'll start to work together to figure out what does it look like to start making progress towards those goals. So we're all on the same team. And now we've got to figure out how we can move forward as a team together so that we can create a school environment where all of the children really do feel like they can thrive.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 11:07

The reality is in this case, and in most other cases, we have to start with the adults, because grownups who try to host conversations about diversity, inclusion and anti-racism, but haven't interrogated their own anti-Blackness could end up doing more harm than good. So that's why I said that "Anti-Racist Baby" might not be the starting point, but it could be a long term goal. Because we want our teachers and other leaders in the school to feel like they have the tools and the skills that they need to facilitate these anti-racist conversations. We want them to feel good about having this material in their school, and we want them to understand what to do with that material. So it really does start with the adults. That might look like bringing in a

professional to host a training. That might look like teaming up with other parents in the community, at the school, to host a book club so that you can have these conversations with the adults. We can't put children in harm's way just because the adults in the room are not willing to do the work that they need to do to host and facilitate brave conversations around race, racism, allyship, and anti-racism. Does that make sense?

J Jasmine Bradshaw 12:20

So just to recap a little bit, you want to start by helping your schools set some goals around what they want their school environment to be like and feel like, and then start breaking those goals down into actionable steps that you can take together that might help you get there. And hopefully "Anti-Racist Baby" will be embraced in the school before too long once you have started on this journey. But you're absolutely right. Your school should be a place where children can freely share their values and their beliefs, and have adults who are equipped with the tools, the knowledge, and the skills to host these conversations in a way that will be reparative and not causing damage to the students in their care.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 13:06

That was a fantastic question. I love answering your questions. I love these real world scenarios. So if you have a question that you want to be answered on Ask Jasmine, go ahead and email us at hello@firstnamebasis.org, and we will put it into our little list so that your question can be answered sometime in the future.

J Jasmine Bradshaw 13:26

Okay, y'all, I will very much miss you while we are on break to get ready for Season Six. Just a reminder, it starts on May 10 of 2022. It's a Tuesday. It's always a Tuesday. You know Tuesday is podcast day. And I'm just super excited for this upcoming season. I mean, the summertime is one of my favorite times to talk about anti-racism and the work that we do because we've got Loving Day, we've got Juneteenth, we just have so many exciting things that we get to celebrate and do together and have some really cool guests. You know, if you watch my Instagram story that I am soon interviewing Britt freaking Hawthorne! Oh my gosh, I can't believe it. Full circle moment. So come back on May 10, we will have a brand new season for you. And you don't have to miss me too much because I'm always over on Instagram at [firstname.basis](https://www.instagram.com/firstname.basis).

J Jasmine Bradshaw 14:19

My friends, thank you for being here. I hope you can feel how much I believe in you, and how deeply I know that when we work together, we can make real change in our communities. Any of the books, podcasts, or articles that I reference will be linked in the show notes. If you are looking for more detailed notes, be sure to head over to our Patreon community. On our Patreon site. I provide all of the outlines that I use to make the episodes and everything is linked there. So you don't have to take furious notes while you are listening. And don't forget to

join us over on Instagram at [firstname.basis](#). If you're interested in partnering with First Name Basis or doing some kind of collaboration, please email us at hello@firstnamebasis.org. All right, have a great week my friends, and I will talk to you again soon.