

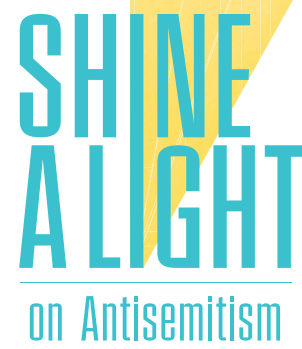
# **A GUIDE FOR PARENTS ON TALKING ABOUT ANTISEMITISM**

Antisemitism is on the rise in America, and many Jewish parents have already had painful conversations about antisemitism with their children and are **working to raise awareness about antisemitism in their children's schools.**

With recent spike in antisemitism, such conversations have taken on more gravity and immediacy. **This guide was created to share best practices to help you navigate this challenging territory.**

The most important conversations on antisemitism that you can have with your children are actually not about antisemitism at all; they are about the joy and meaning in being Jewish. The more you can model joyful and meaningful Jewish identity in your home by celebrating Shabbat, observing holidays, or creating your own family rituals around your shared Jewish identity, the more you are equipping your children with resilience and confidence in who they are.

Of course, it is also important to talk to your children specifically about antisemitism.



# **TALKING ABOUT ANTISEMITISM WITH CHILDREN AGES 5-10**

## **1. CONSIDER THE AGE OF YOUR CHILD**

A five-year-old is very different developmentally than a ten-year-old.

**Ten-year-olds** may already be discussing discrimination and hate in school and even reading age-appropriate books about the Holocaust such as *Number the Stars*.

**Five-year-olds**, on the other hand, are likely only talking about treating others with kindness and respect. Take the lead from your child.

## **2. CONSIDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES**

It may be necessary to talk to your children about antisemitism before they experience it so they know what it is and to come to you about it.

Talk to them about how some people are unkind to those who are different, whether it's the way they look, the religion they practice, etc. If your child asks about an antisemitic incident in the community, or has experienced antisemitism firsthand, you should address it forthrightly and honestly.

Do not alarm your child unnecessarily. Remember that Jews remain largely safe and secure in America.

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### 3. CONTEXTUALIZE ANTISEMITISM

By centering your pride and joy in being Jewish and emphasizing the overall safety of Jews in America. Address your child's questions simply and honestly

You might want to use these talking points:

- I feel very proud to be a part of the Jewish people. We have an incredible history that goes back thousands of years. We have such a beautiful and meaningful religious and cultural heritage. We are so resilient - the Jewish people have survived so much, and we are still here and still thriving.
- But there are people in the world who don't like Jews, who even hate us. Sometimes those people say mean and untrue things about Jews, and sometimes they may even physically hurt Jews.
- Why do some people hate Jews? Some people hate people who are different than they are. In fact, Jews are not the only ones who experience this. It's always wrong to be unkind to people because they look or act differently than you do.
- Overall, we are safe here in America. The government cares about us and wants us to feel comfortable and safe. The police want to protect us and make sure no one can hurt us.
- If you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable or is hurtful to you as a Jew, you should tell an adult as soon as you can, and you should always tell me about it so I can help.

# **TALKING ABOUT ANTISEMITISM WITH PRETEENS AND TEENAGERS**

## **1. LISTEN CAREFULLY TO YOUR CHILD**

The preteen and teen years are often when children experience antisemitism for the first time. Your child may have trouble unpacking antisemitism, whether they experienced it directly or whether it is something in the news or in the community. They will need your advice and help figuring out how to respond. Focus your attention fully on your child and encourage their questions and reflections.

## **2. DRAW CONNECTIONS**

Note the similarities between antisemitism today and historical antisemitism as well as between antisemitism and other forms of hate. By drawing connections, you will help your child contextualize and understand antisemitism more fully.

## **3. BE THERE LATER**

Preteens and teens may take time to process a conversation and may return to it at a later time. Be there to continue the conversation with your child.

## **4. HAVE A VARIETY OF JEWISH CONVERSATIONS**

Preteens and teens are working hard to figure out what they believe and how to think. Ensure that talking about antisemitism is not the only Jewish conversation happening in your home. Encourage conversations about Jewish connections to Israel, Jewish peoplehood, and Jewish beliefs as well.