



NYU

STEINHARDT

Metropolitan Center for Research
on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

Tips for White Parents in Multiracial Schools

“Meaningful integration demands respecting the needs and dreams of all students and families in a school. It means true partnership, mutual investment, being ‘in service’ and ‘in community’; it cannot be a form of colonization/gentrification.”

www.integratedschools.org

We’ve Been Socialized To:	Instead, Let’s:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Think we have all of the information and answers, and just need to get to work ● Take leadership in parent bodies right away ● Be critical of existing school climate and culture because it may be different from what we know ● Build <i>individual</i> relationships with administration and act on our beliefs alone. ● Act as if there is no history of/current parent involvement ● Seek out other white parents and hang out mostly with them ● Assume many things such as families of color are poor, don’t have time, skills or knowledge to help, etc. ● Schedule meetings with people in power by yourselves as white people ● Think that because we may know “research-based” approaches to learning and child development, that everyone else should agree with our ideas ● Approach other white parents as individuals, yet think of parents of color as their race first, individuals second 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Come as someone who has something to learn ● Get to know parents who have been there before us ● Ask questions/listen more than we talk ● Learn about the existing school culture, opportunities and challenges before trying to change anything ● Assume that parents of color are already working to improve the school ● Collaborate with parents of color to identify issues to work on and together decide what research is needed to find solutions ● Remind ourselves that we don’t know what’s best for everyone, even though we may have been socialized to think that we do ● Always include parents of color in meetings with people in power, including planning and scheduling, to be truly collaborative ● Prioritize relationship-building, before accomplishing tasks ● Not make decisions that have collective impact alone or only with white peers ● Step back, especially if you notice that only white people are speaking. If people of color remain silent in a meeting, it’s not because they have nothing to say ● Remember that there is a rich diversity of culture, ethnicity, class, etc. within communities of color ● Respect that families have different cultural expressions – i.e. communication of emotions, attitudes toward authority, parent-child relationships, etc. ● Know that there’s a history around race and class in the school that precedes us ● Educate ourselves about and reflect on our white and class privilege & socialization ● Learn to talk with our children about race so that their questions or lack of knowledge don’t hurt children of color ● Get comfortable being led by people of color

Developed in Collaboration with Parent Leaders Claudette Agard and Felicia Alexander of the NYC Coalition for Education Justice