My child experiences racism:

Recognizing racism – supporting my child

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Arbeitsgemeinschaft Migrantinnen,
Migranten und Flüchtlinge in Niedersachsen

Ein Netzwerk
der Arbeitsgemeinschaft
Migrantinnen, Migranten
und Flüchtlinge
in Niedersachsen (amfn e. V.)

What is racism?

Racism means people are devalued because of their skin color, origin, language, religion, or their culture. Racism is not only what some individuals think; it can also be a system. Individual racism is when one person treats another person worse. Institutional or structural racism works through rules, laws, or norms. It is often hard to recognize.

Racism hurts people, makes them feel they don't belong, and makes them feel less worthy. Experiencing racism is painful and often leaves those affected feeling powerless. It stops people from growing freely. Racism has no place in our society – not even in educational settings. The Basic Law (Germany) bans racist discrimination, but sadly many children experience exclusion, devaluation, or disadvantage in everyday life and in day care, kindergarten, or school.

It is important that we all – parents, teachers, and society – work together to ensure children grow up in a respectful and open environment. Parents play an important role, because they can help their children cope with it and stand up to it.

This brochure is for parents: It helps understand what racism is, what effects it has, and what you can do about it.

How do I recognize racism?

– Forms and effects

Racism exists in all areas of society – also in childcare, classrooms, with educators or teachers, in school books, or among children.

Racist experiences have negative effects, especially on the mental health and educational success of children and adolescents: discrimination experiences worsen learning outcomes, and students are exposed to constant, additional stress. This can lead to mental and physical strain. The same applies to migrant parents themselves. They also experience racist discrimination and must cope with their children's experiences of racism at the same time.

Here we list some examples of racism:

Verbal discrimination:

Someone makes insults or demeaning jokes about skin color, origin, or supposed cultural differences.

Social exclusion:

Children are left out or not involved; parents are not taken seriously.

Unequal treatment:

Children with migrant backgrounds are punished more often and their achievements are rated worse.

Stereotyping and prejudices:

Assumptions about traits or abilities based on presumed origin; stereotypes or prejudices about people with migration backgrounds or from certain countries are also found in curricula and books.

Microaggressions:

Small, often unconscious remarks or actions that can be hurtful. They can be obvious or subtle.

Physical violence:

Children are subjected to physical abuse for racist reasons.

If a child experiences racism, they may behave differently than usual:

- They may not want to go to school anymore.
- They may be sad or angry without knowing why.
- Their grades may drop.
- They may say that teachers or other children are treating them unfairly.

If your child acts this way and you believe racism is the cause, it is important to take action against it.

How can I support my child?

– Take action against racism

Because parents' complaints and children who experience racism are often not taken seriously in day care centers or schools, institutions often do not take proactive steps against racism on their own.

These are The options you have as parents: Talk with your child

- Ask your child about their experience.
- Do not interrupt your child. Do not say immediately whether something is good or bad. Listen well to your child.
- Tell your child: It's good when you speak. It's also good if you need help.
- Ask your child: What do you need to feel better? How would I support you?

Write down what your child says:

If your child reports a specific situation: note the date, time, place, and sequence of events. This helps in conversations with the school or in official reports.

Speak with the school:

Talk to teachers, parent representatives, or the school administration. School social workers or trusted teachers can also be spoken to. Ask for support and clarify what can be done.

Seek help outside the school:

- In some places in Lower Saxony, independent advisory centers against racism in education offer information and help. They discuss with you as parents what options you have and support you in improving the situation for your children.
- There is also the School Psychological Service at the Regional State Offices for Schools and Education (RLSB). They can also provide help if a child is mentally affected by experiences of racism.

Both agencies can accompany you in discussions with the school.

Working together: involvement at school and with other parents

- Get involved at the school in parent associations or the school board.
- Seek support from other affected parents. Bring up the topic at parent meetings.
- Connect with other parents — together you're stronger.
- Participate in school projects that promote inclusion and diversity, or organize your own activities at the school or in the kindergarten.

Strengthening your child against racism:

More tips for parents

- Talk openly and age-appropriately with your children about racism and discrimination.
- Listen carefully to what your child says. Pay attention to how the conversation affects your child.
- Talk with your child about what they can do to oppose racism. Even talking about it is a first step.
- Explain your child's rights. Encourage them to resist racism and seek help.
- Inform yourself about the school system, your rights and duties as parents, and your children's rights.
- Learn about the school system, your rights and duties as parents, and your children's rights. Read books together or watch films about diversity and courage. Attend events
- Encourage your child to ask questions, question information, and form their own opinion.

Where can I find help and where can I get information?

On our website you will find links to further information and counseling services.

https://men-nds.de/rassismus-in-der-schule-linkliste

Important:

Children need parents who listen to them, take them seriously, and show them: You are not alone. I support you!

The Migrant Parents Network of Lower Saxony strengthens parents with a migration history. They should raise their voice for fair, diverse, and inclusive education.

To protect the children, racism in schools and kindergartens must be addressed early and taken very seriously.

Together we can change.
Together we are strong!

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Kontakt:

Migranten**E**ltern**N**etzwerk Niedersachsen

Kurt-Schumacher-Straße 29, 30159 Hannover
Tel.: (0511) 9215106 Fax: (0511) 9215527
elternnetzwerk@amfn.de www.men-nds.de