

## The Importance of Family

**Supportive relationships with parents and other caregivers are crucial in adolescence, even as youth establish stronger relationships with peers and engage in more exploration.** Families support positive identity development—particularly via cultural socialization and pride, they provide a safe base from which to safely explore, and they offer a literal and figurative place of belonging. Parents and caregivers can also provide an excellent buffer against negative outcomes from racism and discrimination and promote resilience in the face of racism.

Specifically, many Black families facilitate culturally relevant coping (for example, African-centered strategies such as spiritual and community-based coping that reflect historical and cultural traditions) and act as a primary source of racial and ethnic socialization, cultural pride, and preparation for bias. Programs specifically aimed at bolstering these types of family supports for Black youth—such as the Strong African American Families Program (SAAF), the EMBRace intervention, and Pathways for African American Success—are likely to promote healthy development and positive outcomes among Black youth and other youth of color, regardless of which specific barriers these youth are facing in their daily experiences with racism.



**The following research-based recommendations can help support positive development for Black youth within the context of family:**

- **Policymakers:** Conduct an equity analysis to identify and remediate disparate impacts of existing federal and state-level health and social policies on Black families.
- **Funders:** Fund the expansion of existing evidence-based, strengths-focused programs and the development (via research and refinement, for example) of new programs that support Black families with adolescents.
- **Parents and Other Caring Adults:** Talk with adolescents about their experiences with race and racism, acknowledge your own emotions around these topics, and build capacity to support adolescents' social and emotional needs.
- **Youth:** Share your views of race and racism with your family (however you define “family”) and learn about different experiences and perspectives as you develop your own ideas.