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PERMLink: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/648410/black-parents-discuss-racial-challenges-children.aspx>

**Synopsis:** Black families with young children are more likely to report discussing the challenges than the advantages they may face because of their race.

August 26, 2024

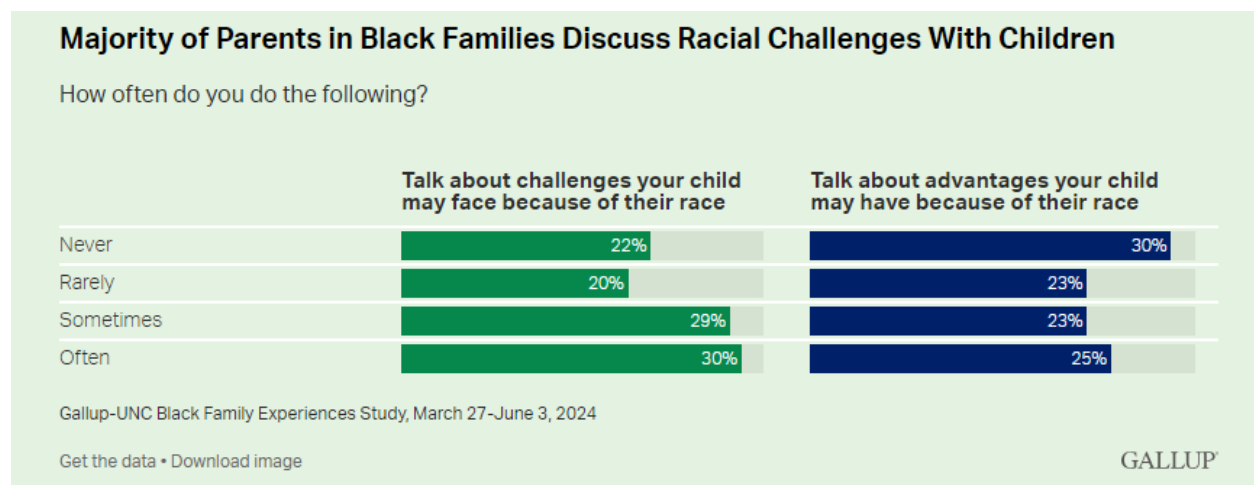
## Most Black Parents Discuss Racial Challenges With Children

**Lower-income, urban Black families are more likely to discuss race with children**

by Ellyn Maese

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- For many, being Black in America carries meaning, history and shared experience that Black children learn about -- either directly or indirectly -- as they grow up. A new survey of Black parents with young children (under age 7) in the U.S., from the [Equity Research Action Coalition](#) at the UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute and the [Gallup Center on Black Voices](#), finds that 59% of parents say they talk with their children about the challenges they may face because of their race either often (30%) or sometimes (29%).

Meanwhile, fewer Black parents, 48%, report that they speak with their children about the advantages they may have because of their race. This includes 25% who say they have such conversations often and 23% who say they have them sometimes.



Although reports indicate that conversations about race are relatively common in Black families, more than a fifth of Black parents (22%) say they never have conversations with their children

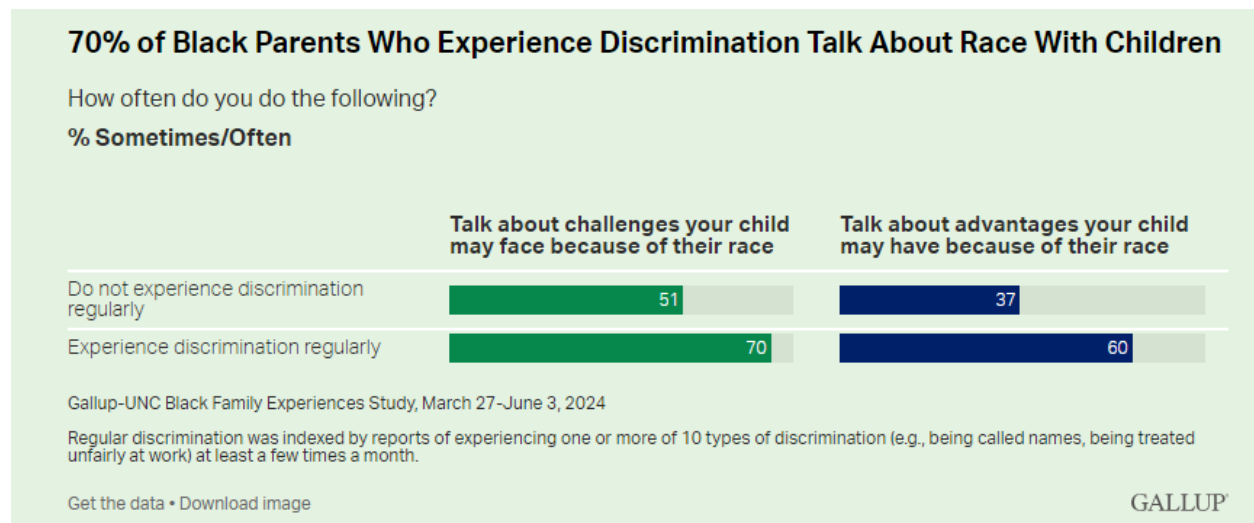
about the challenges they may face because of their racial background, and 30% say they never discuss the advantages they may have because of it.

## Parents Who Experience Discrimination More Likely to Discuss Race

Parents in Black families who report experiencing at least one form of discrimination regularly (a few times a month or more) are substantially more likely to have conversations with their young children about race -- both in terms of the potential challenges and advantages -- than are parents who do not report experiencing discrimination regularly.

Among Black parents, 70% of those who experience regular discrimination report talking to their young children about the challenges they may encounter in life because of their race. In comparison, about half of parents who do not experience frequent discrimination have these types of talks with their children (51%).

Similarly, 60% of Black parents who report experiencing frequent discrimination say they talk to their young children about the advantages they may have in life because of their race -- a rate that is 23 percentage points higher than those who do not report experiencing frequent discrimination (37%).



## Black Families Living in Large Cities Talk About Race More Often

Black parents living in large cities are more likely than those living in suburban areas to report talking with their children about the challenges they may face due to their race. Sixty-three percent of Black parents in urban areas report having these conversations, while only half of those living in the suburbs do.

This urban-suburban gap is also evident in reports of Black families' conversations with their children about the advantages they may have due to their race. More than half of urban families (52%) report discussing advantages, whereas 38% of families living in the suburbs do.

## Substantial Urban-Suburban Gap in Frequency of Discussions About Race

How often do you do the following?

% Sometimes/Often



Gallup-UNC Black Family Experiences Study, March 27-June 3, 2024

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## Conversations About Race Less Common Among Higher-Earning Households

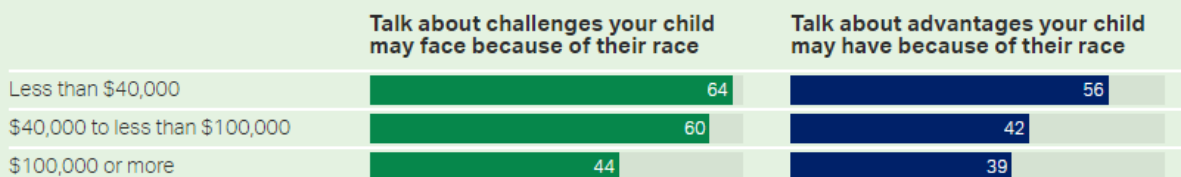
Black parents with an annual household income of \$100,000 or more (44%) are less likely than those earning \$40,000 to less than \$100,000 (60%) to report having conversations about the challenges associated with their race. Similarly, 64% of lower-income families (less than \$40,000) say they have such conversations.

While 39% of Black parents in households earning \$100,000 or more report discussing the advantages of their race, 42% of those in middle-income households and 56% of those in lower-income households do.

## Discussing Race With Children Less Common in Higher-Income Black Families

How often do you do the following?

% Sometimes/Often



Gallup-UNC Black Family Experiences Study, March 27-June 3, 2024

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## Implications

Many Black parents have open dialogues with their young children about their race from an early age. These types of conversations contribute to how children learn to think about race and their own identity and may be especially impactful during the formative years of early childhood, when children are first learning about themselves and the world around them.

These data from the UNC-Gallup study show that in some Black families, conversations about race may not be introduced until children are older, if at all -- while for others, these conversations are part of family life from the start. In talking with their children about race, Black parents may focus on potential challenges, advantages or both. Black families in urban areas and those in lower-income households are more likely to report engaging in both types of conversations.

Parents' own experiences may contribute to their decision to have direct conversations with their children about race. Parents' reports of experiencing frequent discrimination (a few times a month or more) are associated with an increased likelihood of having conversations with their children about the challenges they may experience due to their race. Yet, these parents are also more likely to report having conversations focused on the advantages their children may have, which may promote positive racial identity development.

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These results are based on a Gallup study completed by 587 U.S. adults, aged 18 and older, March 27–June 3, 2024. The survey was conducted in English, and respondents were required to have at least one Black child under the age of 7 to qualify.

Address-based sampling (ABS) was used to recruit 174 respondents for the study, and the remaining 413 respondents were recruited from the Gallup Panel. The Gallup Panel is a probability-based panel of U.S. adults whom Gallup selects using address-based sampling methods and random-digit-dial phone interviews that cover landlines and cellphones.

Gallup weighted the data to account for nonresponse and to reflect the demographic representation of Black parents in the United States, using the most recent Current Population Survey figures.

For results based on this sample, the maximum margin of sampling error, which takes into account the design effect from weighting, is  $\pm 6.1$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error for subgroups are higher. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.