



Alaafia Kids Tidbits



Steering Mixed Race Pre-Teens in the Right Direction

The early teen years, which for many today start at age eleven or twelve, the "tween" years, are often marked by turmoil and uncertainty. Although still children in need of a parent's unconditional love, they may shy away from your attempts at physical affection. At the same time, they are discovering that adulthood is getting closer to becoming their reality. Walking the line between childhood and adulthood as pre-adolescents and soon-to-be adolescents, our children need their parents more than ever to steer them in the right direction for life.



It is common for children of this age to act and talk elitist and exhibit prejudice in their speech, manner, and behavior. They are very critical of others who don't look like them, talk like them, or dress like them. This is normal, however, as these tweens are discovering where

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Letter from *Jeanne*

Welcome to Fall!



Alaafia Kids Company to be listed in a Yoga Teacher's Training Manual Alaafia Kids Company was invited to contribute an article on multicultural education and harmonious living to a group that wants to

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Alaafia Kids Company

Volume 2 Issue 4

Autumn 2006

Special Points of Interest:

- ☉ Steering Mixed Race Pre-Teens in the Right Direction
- ☉ Arab-American Princess Yasmin Aga Khan
- ☉ Skipping Stones Magazine

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they fit and who is in their group. However, children this age need to know that their parents love them and are there to support them.

Pre-adolescents usually have a restricted view of rules and morality, viewing them as restrictions on their freedom rather than as ways to keep order in society or provide justice for everybody. Rebellion from authority may result. Parents should remember that restricting tweens too much or imposing certain things on them (such as strict adherence to a religion or music or sports that they hate), may cause trouble in the long run. Don't throw everything out the window now, but ease up a little during this difficult time.

Sometimes, pre-adolescents may openly express racist comments. Parents need to keep the dialog open by clearly and succinctly stating their values. Describe how contrary racism is to your principles, how damaging it is to others, and how dangerous it is for societal well-being. Still, legitimize your children's worldview by listening. In so doing, you're helping your children on their road to independence. Ultimately we want to create autonomous, clear-thinking adults with moral values. Although seemingly rejecting all you stand for now, they will later (usually in late adolescence) return to your position and understand as well as truly accept anti-prejudicial beliefs.

What Parents Can Do to Help

During the difficult tween years, parents can help their children in several ways to cope well as mixed race pre-adolescents. Here are a few ideas:

- If homeschooling, look for or form a group of multiracial young people who share similar interests. Get your children involved in the same activities, whether it be sports, music, theatre, science, computers, woodwork, etc.
- If you're not homeschooling, look for a multicultural middle school where your children could form or fit in a social group of diverse tweens like themselves.
- If your children tell you about some racial tension in their school or group, do something before it escalates! Contact the police if needed.
- Do some form of "cultural sensitivity" forum with culturally diverse tweens. This could be at your school, place of religious worship, or community center. Encourage dialog. Contact *Alaafia Kids Company* at Jeanne@AlaafiaKids.com for activity ideas and discussion starters.
- Volunteer! Get your children involved in community service. There's no better way to increase sensitivity for other people and cultures than by interacting with them. Tutoring, serving food at homeless shelters, and helping out at a low-income childcare center are just a few ways.

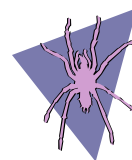
You will make it through the tween years! Following the suggestions here will make it easier and will prepare a great late adolescence marked by tolerance, happiness, and peace.

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Letter from *Jeanne*

do diversity training and discuss peaceful living in its yoga classes for moms and their young children. We think it's a perfect match! They also loved our multicultural activities from the activity guides to our Coloring-Story Books so they'll be integrating many of them into their classes! *Alaafia Kids Company* is thrilled to see this type of initiative happening! We look forward to its continuation! If you know of any group or organization that would also benefit from or be interested in multicultural education for their events or activities, please contact us at Jeanne@AlaafiaKids.com. We would love to share some ideas to spread the word about multicultural education.

Anansi Answers



Dear Anansi,

My five-year-old daughter, who is mixed race, has recently started to ask me black people are "allowed" to go certain places, such as restaurants, playgrounds, or religious places of worship. The follow-up question is always: "Or is it just for whites?"

I find it interesting that she is trying to piece together society's racial fabric and figure out the social dos and don'ts all by herself. At the same time, I'm kind of scared to think that she's developing this notion of blacks as so different from whites. What can I do to help her develop a tolerant view of the world yet still not deny the reality of social prejudices?

Lisa F., Boston, MA

Dear Lisa,

Talking to young children about race is always a delicate subject because, quite frankly, they still see most things in terms of black and white (literally and figuratively). I think you should listen attentively, repeating what she says back to her for clarification, and respond as objectively as possible, limiting your answers to her questions only.

It's always a great thing when your children speak openly to you about matters that touch them so deeply (maybe not now, but in the future they will affect them this way). Make her feel loved and keep the dialog going.

At age five, she's just beginning to figure out her place in the grand scheme of things. Boost her self-esteem and tell her that she is who she is: a wonderful member of the human race.

Anansi

SPOTLIGHT on an *ALAAFIA KID*....

Princess Yasmin Aga Khan

Introduction

This fall, Muslims around the world celebrate Ramadan, the holy season of fasting. In honor of this occasion, *Alaafia Kids Company* spotlights an Arab-American *Alaafia Kid*, Princess Yasmin Aga Khan. Yasmin also celebrates a December birthday, so we wish her a happy one!

Biographical Background

Yasmin was born on December 28, 1957 in Switzerland to American actress Rita Haworth and native Persian, Prince Aly Khan. Her father was one time the vice president of the United Nations General Assembly. Her grandfather was the head of the Ismaili Muslims, a role carried on in the family today by her first cousin. Her parents' marriage lasted four years. Yasmin has no siblings except one half-sister.

Yasmin's was in the Hollywood spotlight even before she was born due to her father's Persian royalty and her mother's film reputation as the film star of the 40s and 50s. Rather than having a reputation as a spiritual leader, Aly Khan was a Jet Set Playboy who met sexpot Haworth at the

Cannes Film Festival in France. After a much publicized romance and after receiving his father's blessing, the couple married and resided in Europe. They traveled extensively and even made a movie together about their travels.

But then Aly's infidelities and the cultural and social differences between Khan and Haworth led to their divorce when Yasmin was only a year old. In 1951, Haworth returned with Yasmin to the US.

Haworth remarried and Yasmin suffered. Haworth often traveled, leaving Yasmin and her stepsister with people who didn't provide adequate care to the two girls. The neglect, unsanitary living conditions and scant food provided to the girls made newspaper headlines while Haworth was led by her new husband into questionable monetary investments through which she lost a lot of her savings. Haworth was also beginning to show signs of Alzheimer's Disease which eventually would claim her life.

Eventually Khan fought for custody of Yasmin but then in 1960, when Yasmin was just ten years old, Khan died in a car accident.

Yasmin somehow made it to college and was graduated from Bennington College in 1973. She wanted to pursue opera singing but when her mother's health became worse, she devoted herself to her care.

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SPOTLIGHT on an *ALAAFIA KID*...Princess Yasmin Aga Khan

Yasmin was so involved in her mother's care that it strained her own marriage. In 1987, the same year her mother died, Yasmin divorced her husband, Basil Embiricos.

In 1987, after her mother's death, This *Alaafia Kid* began working tirelessly for a cure for Alzheimer's by starting a Foundation that would raise money for research into Alzheimer's and increase public awareness and support of the disease. In effect, Yasmin used her name and position to do a lot of humanitarian good throughout her adult life.

Princess Yasmin formed Alzheimer's Disease International, a charitable organization meant to bring awareness and raise funds for research. She organizes yearly Rita Hayworth Galas in New York and Chicago that have raised millions for her cause. In so doing, Yasmin has established a worldwide network to coordinate Alzheimer's Disease research. Her many published interviews and public appearances have contributed to her foundation's success.

Yasmin serves on the Board of Directors, as Vice Chairman, of the Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Association. She also serves on the Nomi-

nation, Development and Public Policies and Issues Committees, as well as the Executive Committee. Yasmin is a National Council Member of the Salk Institute, and a spokesperson for the Boston University School of Medicine, Board of Visitors.

After a second failed marriage, Princess Yasmin now lives happily in Utah with her son, Andrew Ali Aga Khan Embiricos. She continues her fight against the disease that took her mother's life. *Alaafia Kids Company* salutes the life and work of this heroic and inspiring *Alaafia Kid*! May we also use Yasmin as an example for our own lives and do good works for others.



Surfing the.....

Multicultural Web

<http://www.skippingstones.org>



Skipping Stones is a nonprofit children's magazine that is now in its eighteenth year of publication. The *Skipping Stones* website features the magazine with many free downloadable sample pages on it. The website also provides guidelines for people of all ages who wish to submit their writing for publication in *Skipping Stones*.

Skipping Stones is all about multicultural education at its very best. The magazine encourages tolerance, creativity and celebration of cultural and environmental richness no matter where you are in the world. It also serves as a forum for people to share ideas and experiences among children from different lands and backgrounds. You will find stories, articles and photos from all over the world. A plus with this magazine that we haven't found elsewhere is that non-English writings are accompanied by English translations to encourage the learning of other languages.

Each issue also contains international pen pals, book reviews, news, and a guide for parents and teachers. The guide offers creative activities and resources for mak-

ing best use of *Skipping Stones* in your home or school.

Skipping Stones has been honored many times over. It received the **1989 Parent's Choice Award**. *Skipping Stones* is also the winner of the **1997 NAME Award** from the **National Association for Multicultural Education**. In 1999, it received the **Positive Notes Award** from the **Earth Island Journal**.

New at *Skipping Stones* is *A Teacher's Resource Packet on Peace-making, Cooperation and Intercultural/Interfaith Dialogue*. For only \$5, it's packed with great ideas about these important topics.

The site also lists its Honor Books of the Year in four categories: Multicultural and International Awareness Books, Bilingual Spanish/English Books, Nature and Ecology Books, and Teaching Resources.

Any way you look at it, *Skipping Stones* is a great website and great magazine!

Alaafia Kids Company

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World's Children Celebrating Our
Diversity and Heritage



Alaafia Kids Company was founded in 2004 by Jeanne Yacoubou, freelance writer, former educator, and now homeschooling mom to three children. Jeanne is married to Malik Yacoubou from Benin, West Africa.

Alaafia Kids Company specializes in multicultural gifts for children. We sell items that mixed race and transracially adopted children will love including handmade **multicultural dolls**, **handmade African clothes for children** and our own line of educational products with multicultural themes including **Reusable Alphabet Art Flip Charts**, **coloring-story books**, and **puzzles**. We also carry **multicultural books**, **music**, and **arts and crafts supplies**. Our web address is <http://www.AlaafiaKids.com>

Book Nook *Grandpa, Is Everything Black Bad?*

Written by Sandy Lynne Holman and illustrated by Lela Komentiani © 1998

Grandpa, Is Everything Black Bad? is a book that's filled with marvelous prose and wonderful illustrations. It tells the story of African culture and history by an older African American talking to his young grandson. Written by the founder of the Culture C.O.-O. P., an organization dedicated to nonviolence, harmonious living, and multicultural tolerance, it is the first in a trilogy of books that celebrate heritage and diversity.



The book goes a long way to dispel the myths that people hold about the color black and its associations with bad and evil things. It makes a young African American boy feel good about himself for who he is and where he came from. The images from Africa are unforgettable and extraordinarily vivid. *Alaafia Kids Company* thinks this book belongs on everyone's shelf, not just that of African Americans or mixed race children of African descent, but everyone's!

Alaafia Kids Company highly recommends this book for families. It is available in hardback through *Alaafia Kids Company* on its [Multicultural Books Page](#).