



## Getting Started Guide

There is so much to learn (and unlearn) about race and education, and that learning never stops. It may sound overwhelming, but the Integrated Schools community is here to support you. The idea isn't to keep you from making any mistakes; if you never make any mistakes on this journey, you aren't growing as an antiracist person. We hope this guide will give you the confidence to get started, and that drawing on the collective experience of the Integrated Schools community will help to keep you learning to know better and do better.

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Integrated Schools founder Courtney Everts Mykytyn once said, *"People like you do things like this."* We want to acknowledge that she was talking about White people, and that Integrated Schools' resources were developed with the primary goal of helping White people unlearn assumptions and learn to see and decenter Whiteness. This has left many people of color wondering where/whether they belong here. We are now [taking steps](#) to transform Integrated Schools into a multiracial organization. While it will take time for us to expand and evolve, we look forward to generating resources that authentically speak to the specific needs and lived experiences of parents coming to this work from across the spectrum of race and privilege.

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### Resources to help you get started...

- [Where We Begin](#) (webinar) - *IS' first webinar for parents new to this work*
- [Awkward Conversations Guide](#) (pdf) - *Tool for affirming, countering, and transforming everyday conversations we have about schools - with our peers, our in-laws, our neighbors, our parenting partners, and even with ourselves!*
- Podcasts - *So many podcasts, so little time? Here are some to get you started:*
  - This American Life w/ Nikole Hannah-Jones: [The Problem We All Live With](#): Listen to both episodes.
  - From our archives:
    - [The Bordon Family](#):
    - [Sacrificing on the Altar of Social Justice \(Smog\)](#)
    - [Why My Choice Matters: Taking Back the Playground](#)
- [Smog Video](#) (short video) - *Racism and White supremacy culture is the smog we all breathe; this video explains Integrated Schools' theory of change*

## Before you tour...

For those of us who have spent most of our lives in predominantly White spaces, or have been taught to view those spaces as “normal” or more desirable, the physical act of stepping inside a global-majority school can be a first concrete step away from segregation. That said, the whole “school tour” phenomenon tends to cater to parents-as-consumers, fueling our segregationist and opportunity-hoarding impulses. Here are a few thoughts we try to keep in mind when visiting schools:

- **We are not tourists or consumers.** We try to approach visiting global-majority schools as though we have already decided to enroll our children there, not just to see it, and not to be wooed.
- **We pay attention not only to what we see and hear but to our own reactions.** We are here as much to learn about ourselves and our relation to the generational work of integration as to learn something about a school.
- **We don’t come in with a long list of questions.** School principals and staff are busy professionals whose time is best spent on educating students, not jumping through hoops to “sell” their school - or to give us props for asking the right questions.
- **Open heart, open mind.** Above all, we enter these spaces with open hearts and open minds as well as open eyes. We seek to see each student, teacher, and staff person in their full humanity, just as we do our own children.
- **Change the conversation.** Find at least two things that you really like about the school, and then share those things with your friends. There is great power in the “whisper networks” about schools, and every conversation we have is a chance to change the narrative.

Check out [this blog post](#) for a more thorough discussion of things to consider and questions to ask yourself before, when (and if) you tour.

## Other ways to engage with Integrated Schools...

- Our website: [integratedschools.org](http://integratedschools.org). Learn more about us, explore reading suggestions and other resources, blog posts, and more.
- [Caregiver Connection](#) - Looking for someone to answer your questions or just help you think things through? Sign up and we’ll connect you with a real, live parent who has put their kids in an integrating school.
- Check to see there is a chapter in your city, and then get plugged in. The full list of chapters and their leaders can be found [here](#), and many chapters also have local Facebook groups, which can be found [here](#).
- We have an amazing podcast! All the episodes can be found [here](#).
- Be sure to like our public-facing [Facebook page](#)! Your engagement there is important and helps other people to become aware of our movement.
- We also offer book club discussion spaces approximately four times a year. Check [this page](#) to register for an upcoming event, or [sign up for our email list](#) to be notified.
- Make sure to give us a follow on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)!
- If any of this work has been valuable to you, we encourage you to [donate](#) (or join our podcast’s [Patreon](#)) to make sure it can continue.
- Email us at [hello@integratedschools.org](mailto:hello@integratedschools.org)

**Welcome to the Integrated Schools community!**