

# “Think of the children!”: Understanding Parental and Community Opposition to Critical Race Theory in Schools

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## Introduction

CRITICAL RACE THEORY BY  
GOOGLE SEARCHES  
(UNITED STATES)



Over the past three years, the controversy around Critical Race Theory (CRT) in schools has received significant attention on social media and the news.

Critical Race Theory refers to a framework to understand how politics, economics, legal systems, society, and overall structures are impacted by race and ethnicity.

This thesis seeks to understand what people think Critical Race Theory is and why they're opposed to CRT in education.

## Methodology

Thirteen open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted with parents and community members in rural Northwestern Washington on their knowledge of and opinions around Critical Race Theory in education between October 2021-January 2022.

Eleven of the respondents were white, and two of the respondents were Asian.

## Findings

The primary reason cited for opposition to Critical Race Theory was a concern for the well-being of children.

Parents and community members indicated concern for white children and children of color. Parents expressed concern that white children would be made to feel guilty for their racial background and history, which is out of their child's control, and taught that they were intrinsically evil or wrong for being white.

Additional concern was expressed for children of color being taught that they are subordinate to white peers and perpetual victims, incapable of achieving greater life outcomes if they are taught the realities of institutional racism.

## Conclusion

Those opposing Critical Race Theory mainly operate out of a 'colorblind' approach.

This approach is in significant opposition to Critical Race Theory, which is founded on the belief of naming the lived experiences of people of color and acknowledging the gravity of institutional racism.

This colorblind approach shies away from teaching the realities of institutional racism historically and contemporarily through CRT because of a misguided fear that teaching past racism will lead to racism replicated in the future.

In doing so, erasing the realities of institutional racism and lived experiences of people of color leads to the further perpetuation of systemic racism.

