



## On Code & On Point: 8 Black Hands Provides Parent Guide

Posted on July 17, 2022 by Educator Barnes

Last week, I headed downtown with my boys. This might be the point where you assume we went to the Indiana Black Expo. Instead, I decided to attend the [EdFit Education is Power Summit](#). Most importantly, I was there when the [8 Black Hands](#) kicked off their [On Code](#) tour,

and I wanted my boys to meet the 8 Black Hands, which includes Christopher Stewart, Sharif El-Mekki, Raymond Ankrum, and Dr. Charles Cole III. These brothers fight for other people's children on a daily basis, especially Black children. They always have words of wisdom to share.

After introducing my sons to the Hands, we sat in the front and were able to listen to their podcast recording live! Being the English teacher that I am, I had my sons take notes during the event and write an essay from their notes after the event. It's the summer, but learning can still happen!

The tour kicked off with the Hands identifying overused sayings in education. Some they identified were:

*"The education system is broken."*

*"The education system wasn't built for us."*

*"Education is the Civil Rights issue of our time."*

Essentially, they wanted us to move from behind these excuses and move to the mindset of implementing solutions. They want to influence parents to shift their thinking.

Along with the On Code tour, there is also a free e-book. In "[On Code: A Toolkit to Navigate Education](#)," the Hands provided tips for parents, and Stewart stated, "Schools don't have children, parents do." He continued by pushing back on the narrative that parents need to be empowered. "Parents don't need to be empowered," he said, "they need to be in power."

Being on code is an expression that means there are guidelines and rules we agree to follow to do a certain task. This particular task is bringing out excellence and academic achievement in our children. The code was made explicit during the event and in the e-book.

The 8 Black Hands want parents to know it is their responsibility to take action in their children's education. They cannot hide behind statements like "the system is broken." Instead, they need to look inward and ask, "How do you love your greatest asset?" Dr. Cole asked this question during the show. The asset is the child. The school system should not be putting in more work than the parents. Additionally, Dr. Cole said, "Don't be passive about your child."

For a moment, the conversation shifted to immigrants. Ankrum said, "If you don't know about the system, you are not going to blame the system," to explain that some immigrants have become successful in America despite coming from situations worse than their American-born counterparts.

Stewart was not so quick to agree. He countered, saying, "Conservatives should not use immigrant success against us, but we can learn from it."

EI-Mekki said, "Some teachers' only relationship with Black & brown communities are with their students ... I just don't see a positive outcome with that." We cannot trust our kids with people who only choose to be around Black & Latino people when they enter their job at their school. If this wasn't clear enough, later, Dr. Cole said, "The education system is a broken refrigerator, and you keep feeding your kids spoiled milk." To the original point of the show, we KNOW this. What are we going to do about it? How can parents take back the power?

EI-Mekki steered the conversations to solutions by making a point about intellectual theft. He said, "Some people's eggs are in the plagiarism basket ... they monetize other people's stuff." EI-Mekki continued by explaining that everything we need is in our community. We do not need anyone to come and save us. Some of these "saviors" are just selling back to us solutions they stole from our communities in the first place.

Stewart said, "Not all people are prepared to get children to their highest potential." However, the Hands suggested that parents in power can get their children to reach their highest potential. Go to [8bh.org](http://8bh.org) and download the On Code e-book.

To learn my children's take on the show, read their pieces below.

[8 Black Hands & Black Education](#) by Jeremiah J. Barnes

[Parents Are Part of a Kid's Education](#) by James J. Barnes