



How Race Shapes Children's Identities

Racism is prevalent in our society and it impacts all children's understanding of themselves and others. Beginning in infancy, children learn about race from the actions and words of those around them. These ideas inform how they treat and perceive themselves and others. I-LABS is committed to understanding how children think about race and how racism shapes children's identities, with the goal of supporting anti-racist practices in educational spaces and in our communities.

At a Glance



Clip: Conversations About Race

<https://bit.ly/3bmEhMX>



Handout: Talking About Race

<https://bit.ly/3l5TlgV>



Handout: Race - What Kids Know as They Grow

<https://bit.ly/3gm8Zqm>

Dig Deeper



Featured Resource: How to Talk to Your Kids About Race

<https://bit.ly/34l356B>



Featured Resource: What Kids at Different Ages Know About Race

<https://bit.ly/329086q>



Featured Resource: How Children's Developing Sense of Self Affects Learning & Self-Esteem

<http://bit.ly/3hb9FFq>

Want to Learn More?

<https://modules.ilabs.uw.edu/outreach>

Read Our Research

In middle childhood, children's ideas about race and gender are strongly influenced by their experiences. Although most children categorized gender as more meaningful than race, Black and Multiracial children were more likely than White children to say race is meaningful. When talking about race, White children talked about equality or sameness, while Black children focused on pride and positive traits, and Multiracial children talked about family.

Rogers & Meltzoff, 2017, Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychol.

<https://bit.ly/34neKly>

Stereotypes and systems reinforce ideas about who school is "for" and who does well in school. Although White students and Black, Indigenous, and students of color (BIPOC) have equally strong senses of self-esteem, BIPOC students in this study were less likely to associate school with their own personal identity.

Cvencek, Fryberg, Covarrubias & Meltzoff, 2018, Child Dev.

<https://bit.ly/2FM80TW>

This paper provides a state-of-the-art summary about how, when, and why children develop biases about race and what can be done to help children resist racial stereotypes. Bias is decreased when children receive intentional education about racism and prejudice and have opportunities for positive interactions with children who do not share their same race, gender, or language.

Skinner & Meltzoff, 2019, Soc. Issues Policy Rev.

<https://bit.ly/3aleXRj>

Racial prejudice influences families and children from a young age. These papers review eye-opening research, covering: (i) infants' preferences for looking at people of different races, (ii) how children learn prejudice from watching adults, and (iii) evidence revealing that discrimination against Black children occurs as early as preschool.

Thompson, Meltzoff, & Gilliam, 2021, Zero to Three

<https://bit.ly/3h22r6v>