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Exploring the Influences of Educational Television and Parent-Child

Discussions on Improving Children's Racial Attitudes

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Exploring the Influences of Educational Television and Parent-Child Discussions

on Improving Children's Racial Attitudes

by

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Dedication

       This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful husband, Glenn Simpson, who has loved me unconditionally and supported me throughout the stressful process of finishing this big project.

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On Improving Children's Racial Attitudes

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Much concern has been voiced about the development of prejudicial beliefs in young children. Previous research indicates that socializing agents such as parents and the media can influence children's development of positive and negative racial attitudes. Little research has examined how parents can use educational television to introduce discussions about race with their children. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to investigate the influences of educational television and parent-child discussions about race may have on improving White children's attitudes towards Blacks.

Ninety-three White children aged 5-7 years old and their parents participated. Parents' and children's racial attitudes were tested during their first visit to a research laboratory. Parents also filled out questionnaires regarding their involvement with their children's television use and how often they engaged their children in discussions about

race. Families were then randomly divided into four groups: (1) a video-only group where parents were asked to screen five educational videos (provided by the researcher) over the course of one week; (2) a video-and-discussion group where in addition to the videos, parents were given a set of topics to discuss with their children during and after the screenings; (3) a discussion-only group, where parents were required to have the discussions with their children without the use of the educational videos; and (4) a control group. All families returned to the laboratory about one week later. At the follow-up visit, children's racial attitudes were reassessed.

Three main hypotheses guided the study: (1) Children's pre-test attitudes towards Blacks were expected to be influenced by their prior exposure to Black people, as well as their prior conversations with their parents about race, such that children with more exposure were expected to hold more positive attitudes; (2) Children who watched racially diverse programs and discussed the content with their parents were expected to show more positive attitudes towards Blacks when comparing their post-test attitude scores to their pre-test scores; (3) Children in the video-and-discussion and discussion-only groups were expected to be better able to predict their parents' racial attitudes at post-test, compared to their own pre-test predictions and compared to children who had not had such discussions with their parents.

Children who reported having Black friends showed slightly more positive evaluations of Blacks. However, neighborhood diversity was positively correlated with children's negative evaluations of Blacks. Results revealed that parents in general were very reluctant to discuss the topic of race with their children. Only 33% of mothers and 20% of fathers reported having significant race related discussions. Many parents chose

not to have such discussions because they did not want to make a "big deal" out of it, they did not think it was important to talk about, or they did not know how to approach the topic in conversation. Parents' and children's racial attitudes were uncorrelated, indicating that children do not automatically adopt their parents' attitudes. However, children's perceptions of their parents' racial attitudes were significantly correlated with their own positive and negative attitudes towards Blacks.

It appeared that parents were equally reluctant to talk about race even when specifically instructed to do so. Close to half of parents in the two discussion groups admitted that they only briefly mentioned some of the topics. Only 10% of the parents reported having more in-depth discussions with their children. This likely affected the effectiveness of the intervention, and the children in the experimental groups did not show statistically significant improvements of their racial attitudes following the intervention.

Prior to the intervention, many children reported that they did not know if their parents liked Black people or if their parents would approve of them having Black friends. Children who were aware of their parents' interracial friendships showed more positive and less negative evaluations of Blacks. Furthermore, children in the discussion groups expressed more awareness of their parents' racial attitudes following the intervention. Implications of the results of this study are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

By the time they are six years old, many children are already showing prejudiced attitudes towards people of other racial and ethnic groups (Aboud, 1988; Aboud & Doyle, 1996a; Bigler, 1999; Katz & Kofkin, 1997). This is especially true with White children who tend to display more racial bias than other groups (Corenblum & Annis, 1993; Katz, 2003; Milner, 1975). Racially-biased children may grow up to be prejudiced adults and this contributes to the racial tension in our society. Once attitudes have been held for many years, they become a stable part of a person's personality, and it follows that it will be more difficult to change attitudes in adulthood than in childhood. Therefore, it is important to investigate how children's racial attitudes may be improved. Many factors have been identified to influence children's development of racial attitudes and prejudice, including parents, peers, amount of exposure to people of other races, and the mass media (Katz, 2003). The next sections of this chapter will review the research literature on the development of racial attitudes in general and then parent, peer, contextual, and television influences on racial attitude development.

DEVELOPMENT OF RACIAL ATTITUDES

Several theories have been set forth regarding how racial attitudes are formed. Gordon Allport (1954) claimed that people are naturally inclined to develop prejudice

based on their inherent need to categorize things. The act of categorizing has the effect of accentuating differences between the categories (Tajfel, 1981), and when categorizing people, the categorizer tends to make the distinction between the ingroup (the group to which he or she belongs) and the outgroups (groups to which he or she does not belong). Research has consistently shown that children prefer their own groups (Brewer, 1979; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961; Sigelman, Miller, & Whitworth, 1986; Yee & Brown, 1992). For example, Sherif and colleagues (1961) conducted an experiment titled *The Robbers Cave Experiment* in which they showed how easily groups formed and group conflicts arose when the groups were competing for desired resources in limited supply. Yee and Brown (1992) found that children as young as three years were sensitive to group performance when evaluating their own versus other groups, and already by the age of five years the children showed very strong ingroup bias regardless of the relative performance of the groups. Young children generally use concrete and observable cues when identifying and categorizing themselves and others (Ramsey, 1991); thus, they quickly learn to categorize people based on race and are inherently biased to prefer their own racial group versus the others.

Cognitive developmental theorists have proposed stage models to explain children's development of racial knowledge and attitudes (Aboud, 1977; Goodman, 1964; Porter, 1971). According to Goodman (1964), racial attitude development goes through three main phases. The first to develop is racial awareness. Around the ages of 3 to 5 years old, children learn to recognize racial differences, label the differences, and categorize themselves within a racial group (Stevenson & Stewart, 1958). The next phase is racial orientation. This is when the first positive and negative feelings about

racial groups show up. Usually the child absorbs a polarized evaluation of the groups involved – one is good, one is bad. These so-called "embryonic racial attitudes" (Milner, 1975) are present around the ages of 3-6 years. These first two phases form the foundations of racial attitude development. During this time period, the child begins to father more complex information about racial groups, including stereotypes and social status. These concepts are learned from the adults around them, as well as the society as a whole. Children enter into this third phase around the ages of 6-8 years old (Milner, 1975).

According to most cognitive developmental theories, children are assumed to have limited understanding of race until they are about 7 years old (Goodman, 1964; Katz, 1976). However, Van Ausdale and Feagin (1996) argued against this assumption and claimed that children as young as 3 years old employ racial concepts and demonstrate awareness of the importance of skin color. Their child-centered research, which involved observation in natural settings, indicated that 3-year-old children had well-defined negative biases toward people of other racial and ethnic groups. However, they did not offer a clear explanation of how the children developed such biases. Recent theories have placed an emphasis on socialization influences and social learning theory.

Socialization theories focus on the direct and indirect influences of socializing agents, particularly parents, and to some extent the general social environment. Factors such as parental values, exposure to people of other ethnic groups, and cognitive development are thought to influence children's racial attitudes (Milner, 1975). Social learning theories emphasize learning based on modeling and imitation, which can occur

when children observe their parents, their peers, and even television. These concepts will be discussed in more detail below.

PARENTAL INFLUENCES ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT OF RACIAL ATTITUDES

Parents are the major socializing agents in young children's lives. They take on the roles of teachers, models, and disciplinarians (Holden, 1997). In the child's early years, the power of socialization lies almost exclusively with the parents. Parents are responsible for making sure that the young child's biological, material, and emotional needs are met. Children come to depend on them, they imitate them, and they slowly begin to adopt the mannerisms of their parents. In addition, young children do not have much access to alternative answers or explanations, so the child's contact with the world is essentially filtered through the parents' biases and perspectives (Milner, 1975). Essentially, parents are the interpreters and instructors of the value systems that are in place in our society.

Parents influence their children both directly and indirectly. Direct influences include instructions of behavior, values, and morals, as well as guiding decisions, and discipline. Indirect influences include modeling of behavior, values, and morals, as well as the control of children's environment (such as neighborhoods, schools, technology, entertainment opportunities, and access to friends; Parke et al., 2003; Steinberg, 2001).

In terms of their children's racial attitudes, parents can have both direct and indirect influences. Direct influences would include teaching children explicitly about race, instructing them how to interact with people of other racial groups, and disciplining

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them based on their expressed attitudes and behaviors. Such direct influences could be either positive or negative, depending on the parents' own racial attitudes and the importance they place on diversity and interracial contact. Research has shown that although some parents believe it is important to talk to their children about race, most parents refrain from doing so (Katz, 2003). For example, Katz and Kofkin (1997) asked mothers and fathers to go through a book with their children and talk about the pictures. The pictures were of children varying in age, race, and gender. Gender differences were frequently mentioned; however, race was almost never mentioned.

The importance placed on race-related discussions varies depending on the race of the parents. White parents are more likely to express that they do not think it is important to discuss race (Katz, 2003), whereas Black and Latino parents are more likely to consider it important as well as to engage in various types of ethnic socialization (Hughes, 2003; Marshall, 1995). Nonetheless, even when minority families place importance on such socialization, they do not always engage in a lot of it. Often, Black parents choose to focus on educational attainment, moral values, and hard work rather than more ethnic-specific socialization. For example, Marshall (1995) found that most Black parents emphasized education, religion, self-esteem, and hard work as the most important goals of childrearing. Very few (only 2%) of these parents indicated that they thought it was important to instill a sense of ethnic pride and identity in their children. Interestingly, children whose parents did include discussions of race in their parenting practices were more advanced in their identity development. Interestingly, Marshall (1995) also found large discrepancies between parents and children's reports of race discussions. Although the parents might indicate that they engaged in ethnic socialization at home, their children

often reported that their parents did not teach them anything about race. It is possible that both parent and child informants were partially correct: parental messages may not have been explicit enough and therefore the messages were not successfully transmitted.

There are multiple reasons parents give for not discussing racial issues with their children. Some parents may think that it is not important to do so, because they believe that their children are "innocently color-blind" or their personal beliefs are that people are all the same (Katz, 2003). Some parents may believe that children do not develop negative attitudes toward people of other races unless such attitudes are modeled or taught. These parents may fear that if they talk about race, their children will begin to notice racial differences (Aboud & Doyle, 1996a; Katz, 2003). Another reason for parental reluctance may simply be that the parents do not know how to bring up the topic or what to say, and it may feel unnatural to discuss race if it is not a topic they usually talk about. However, little systematic research has been conducted on the reasons why so many parents choose to avoid the issue of race in their conversations with their children. The present study aims to investigate this further.

Research comparing children's and their parents' racial attitudes reveals weak correlations between the two (Aboud & Doyle, 1996a; Katz, 2003). Parents often assume that their children have racial attitudes that are similar to their own, and they are surprised to find out otherwise. It has been suggested that children may actively form rigid racial attitudes that are resistant to messages from adult authority figures (Bigler, 1999). However, it may also be that without explicit parent-child conversations about race, children are more likely to learn from other outlets, such as peers and the media. Influences from these other sources can often be negative. In families where parents do

talk to their children about race, parents and children's attitudes are in fact more similar (Katz, 2003).

If parents do not have explicit discussions with their children about race, children may form perceptions of their parents' racial attitudes based on more indirect experiences. Although Allport believed that prejudice begins in the home, he proposed that it was "caught" rather than taught directly (Allport, 1954). In other words, he placed more emphasis on the indirect influences parents have on their children's racial attitudes. Such indirect influences may include modeling behavior, such as the way parents interact with people from other races, including subtle, non-verbal responses towards these outgroup members (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002), or the way they talk about people from other races in their everyday discussions. Furthermore, learning may also take place as a result of omission. If parents choose not to talk about or interact with people from other racial or ethnic groups, their children may assume that these people are unimportant or should be avoided and disliked (Aboud, 2005). In addition, children may also be more easily influenced by other sources, such as peers and the media, if parents do not have explicit discussions with them.

PEER AND CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT OF RACIAL ATTITUDES

Friends are often considered important socializing agents, especially as children reach school age and start spending more time outside the home. Social groups are important to children (Milner, 1996). According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and social identity development theory (Nesdale, 1999; 2001), children

have a fundamental need to belong. Therefore, they are motivated to establish friendships and become members of social groups. Research shows that over time, friends influence each other and become more alike (Deutsch & Mackesy, 1985; Kandel, 1978). It would therefore be reasonable to assume that friends are likely to influence each other's racial attitudes. In addition, cross-race friendships can be influential in reducing prejudice (Aboud & Levy, 2000; Ellison & Powers, 1994; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). Aboud and Doyle (1996) found that children's racial attitudes were not strongly related to either their parents' or their friends' attitudes. Nonetheless, the authors found that children's perceptions of their parents' and friends' attitudes were that they were similar to their own.

Children learn about the world through their social environment. Some researchers have investigated the influence of neighborhood and school diversity on children's racial attitudes. The "contact hypothesis" indicates that interaction with people from other racial groups can help decrease racial biases and promote harmonious racial relationships (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). However, it has been argued that in order to promote positive racial attitudes, interracial contact has to be cooperative rather than competitive, and individuals from the different groups should be of equal status (Barnard & Benn, 1988). Neighborhood contact with people from other racial groups may therefore help to improve racial attitudes, because residential neighborhoods tend to group people of similar socioeconomic status (Yancey, 1999). Some researchers have found this to be the case (see e.g., Bledsoe, Welch, Sigelman, & Combs; Gaertner et al., 1996) while others have not (Fosset & Kielcolt, 1989; Glaser, 1994; Yancey, 1999). Thus, there is evidence that children are influenced by their peers

and their social environment; however, other socializing agents, such as parents and television, may exert a greater influence when it comes to children's racial attitudes.

TELEVISION INFLUENCES ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT OF RACIAL ATTITUDES

During the past two decades, the influences of television on children's development has received increased attention due to the large amount of time children spend watching television and the view that television has taken on the extra role of a socializing agent. On average, children watch 3-4 hours of television per day (Center for Media Education, 1997; Roberts & Foehr, 2004). Therefore, television has often been referred to as a "window on the world" (Barcus, 1983; Graves, 1999). Television thus is a medium through which children experience and learn about the things they would not otherwise personally experience. Through television they learn about societal customs, values, morals, and expectations. Television also provides children with information about people of other racial and ethnic groups. While older children and adults can be more objective and critical of the media content to which they are exposed, young children are more likely to view media content as a glimpse of reality and thus they are more likely to be influenced by it (Milner, 1975).

Atkin, Greenberg, and McDermott (1979) reported that approximately 40% of the White children in their study cited television as their main source of information about Black people. However, when they included only children who did not have direct contact with Black people, 68% of those children reported that television was their main source of information about the other group. Other studies have found similar trends (see

Graves, 1999). This research indicates that television can have a strong influence on children's racial attitudes.

The content of television, with regard to depiction of the races, is concerning. Children Now, a non-profit children's advocacy organization, has conducted several content analyses on the diversity of television. According to their *Fall Colors: Prime Time Diversity Report 2003-2004,* prime time television remains overwhelmingly white (Children Now, 2004). Whites account for 73% of prime time television portrayals, Blacks comprise 16%, and Latinos represent only 6.5%. However, when looking only at the English-language programming (i.e., excluding all-Spanish channels, such as Univision and Telemundo, which are the nation's largest Spanish-language television networks), the television representation of Latinos accounts for only about 1%. Considering that Latinos make up almost 13% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), and the fact that they are the fastest growing ethnic minority in the United States (Subervi-Velez & Colsant, 1993), these numbers are daunting. Furthermore, when minorities are represented on television, it is often in minor roles. Blacks and Latinos are often associated with low-status jobs or criminal activity (Graves, 1999; Greenberg, 1986; Subervi-Velez & Colsant).

The limited inclusion of ethnic minorities on television is likely to convey to children the implicit message that these groups are not important (Graves, 1999). Furthermore, the type of roles minorities tend to play promotes the view that they lack power and status, and the segregation of races in different television shows sends the message that the groups are meant to be segregated. Bigler and Brown (2002) found that children who viewed a videotape where people in novel groups (wearing red or blue T-

shirts) interacted in segregated patterns rated the two groups of people as liking each other less than did the children who watched a videotape where the groups interacted in an integrated setting.

PBS programming and children's programming does portray a fairly colorful world (Children Now, 2002; Greenberg & Brand, 1993). The Disney Channel and Nickelodeon feature several programs with minority main characters and mixed-race casts. Furthermore, *Sesame Street*, which has been on the air since 1969 (Lovelace & Scheiner, 1994), has continuously portrayed multi-ethnic settings, along with both ethnic-neutral characters (e.g., Big Bird, Bert, and Ernie) and an ethnically diverse cast of children. However, the 1999 State of the Children's Television Report (published by the Annenberg Public Policy Center) indicated that only 28% of children's television contained "considerable" diversity, 40% contained no diversity at all, and 32% contained only a little (Woodard, 1999). Gidney and Dobrow (2001, cited in Children Now, 2002) found that 70-80% of lead characters on children's programs in the 1996-97 season were White. Thus, there is a need for more diversity and minority representation, not only in prime time adult programming, but in children's television programming as well.

Theoretical Models of How Children Learn From Television

Several theoretical models offer explanations of how the exclusion of, or the stereotypic portrayals of, ethnic minorities influence children's development of racial stereotypes. Cultivation theory proposes that television "cultivates" beliefs about the world (i.e., norms, structure, and social behavior) through the way the world is depicted (Comstock, 1993; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 1986; Graves, 1999). Thus, the

world portrayed on television becomes the social reality of the viewer. According to this model, the lack of minority representation on television will lead viewers to believe that minority groups are unimportant. The limited inclusion of minority characters in low-status occupations or in criminal roles will lead viewers to conclude that minority group members are powerless and immoral. Furthermore, minority group members watching such portrayals of their own group will likely develop low self-esteem (Barcus, 1983; Graves, 1993; 1999; Palmer, Taylor Smith, & Strawser, 1993).

Another theory is constructivism. This theory holds that children actively construct representations of the world based on their prior beliefs and the information with which they are presented (Graves, 1993; 1999). In other words, they develop racial schemata (beliefs and cognitions which form the basis of their understanding of how people of various racial and ethnic groups are likely to act). These schemata cause children to selectively attend to information presented to them (most likely they will pay greater attention to same-race characters and information congruent with their racial schema). Children will also remember schema-congruent information, and they may distort information that does not match their racial schema. Bigler and Liben (1992) found that children with very rigid gender schemas distorted counter-stereotypic information which was presented to them in stories. For example, if the story was about a male nurse, the children recalled him as being a doctor, a male flight attendant was remembered as the owner of the plane, and a female school principal was remembered as a "lunchroom lady." Bigler and Liben (1993) found similar results for children's race related memories when the children were presented with stories that had counterstereotypic information about Black and White children.

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Television may influence the development and modification of children's racial schemata. Children who do not have personal experiences with people from other racial and ethnic groups are likely to look to television for information about these groups and form racial schemas about these groups. Thus, television may have a negative influence, as mentioned previously, because minority groups are portrayed less often, in smaller roles, and in negative, stereotypic roles (e.g., low-status occupations or criminals).

On the other hand, television may also serve a positive purpose. One of the prosocial benefits of television is thought to be combating prejudice. Frequent positive portrayals of minority group members interacting with majority group members in a friendly and cooperative manner can send the message that minority group members are just as important and should be regarded as equals. Children may also begin to imitate these friendly interactions modeled on television when they have the chance, and television may influence the development of more positive attitudes towards members of other racial and ethnic groups, such as explained by the social learning theory.

Social learning theory considers television to be an important influence on behavior simply through providing examples of categories of individuals (e.g., Bandura, 1986). When these examples are portrayed as normative, they will be especially influential (Comstock, 1993). This model has been used extensively in research studying the effects of television violence on children's aggression levels (e.g., Tan, 1986). In terms of interracial cooperation, television serves as a role model for these types of interactions. The lack of interracial cooperation portrayed on television leads viewers to believe that this type of cooperation is not important. Furthermore, children with limited exposure to members of other racial or ethnic groups will be lacking appropriate role

models for interracial cooperation. Role models are important in that children often learn a lot by imitating models provided in their environment (Barcus, 1983). Noble (1975, cited in Barcus, 1983, p.72) concluded that:

> …children's perceptions of occupational roles and ethnic stereotypes are related to the second-hand or vicarious experiences on television. To the extent that the child lacks any countervailing personal experience, the more vulnerable he or she is to the televised reality.

Positive influences of racially diverse television

Another issue in the socialization of racial attitudes is the extent to which the available ethnically diverse programming can influence and possibly improve children's racial attitudes. As mentioned previously, some children show prejudiced attitudes at a young age, and considering how influential television is in children's lives, educational programming may be an option for teaching children positive messages about other racial groups. The "drench" hypothesis (Greenberg, 1986) postulates that a few "critical portrayals" of minority figures may have the power to "drench" or outweigh the more typical stereotyped portrayals that occur more frequently on television. Such critical portrayals may include role portrayals that stand out or are more captivating or interesting than those commonly depicted.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the positive effects of exposure to inter-ethnic television programs. The Children's Television Workshop created two episodes of *Sesame Street* which promoted cross-racial friendships. In "Visiting Iesha," a white girl visits an African American girl in her home, and in "Play Date," a white boy visits an African American boy and his family in their home. After watching these episodes, preschoolers said that they would like to be friends with a child

of a different race, suggesting the positive influence of the shows (Fisch et al., 1999).

Several studies, both on the U.S. based *Sesame Street*, as well as a Canadian version of

the show, revealed that minority children developed a more positive self-image, and

White children had more positive attitudes toward Blacks and Latinos (Graves, 1993;

Lovelace & Scheiner, 1994). In addition, there is evidence that exposure to non-

traditional or counter-stereotypic portrayals of minorities and gender roles can change

and improve children's racial and gender attitudes (Calvert, Kotler, Zehnder, Shockey,

2003; Rosenwasser, Lingenfelter, & Harrington, 1989; Van Evra, 2004).

Positive effects of exposure to diverse television programs may also be explained

by the "extended contact" hypothesis. It is hypothesized that "vicarious" experiences of

interracial friendships can result in reduced prejudice towards people of other races

(Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). To date, most of the research on the

extended contact effect has been conducted by social psychologists, but recently

developmental psychologists have found evidence for this effect with young children as

well (Cameron & Rutland, 2006). Cameron and Rutland (2006) and Cameron, Rutland,

Brown, and Douch (2006) used storybook interventions in which children were read

stories that portrayed friendships across group memberships, such as between disabled

and non-disabled children and between native-born children and refugees. In both

studies, children were read the stories once a week for 6 weeks. Both interventions were

successful in terms of improving young children's outgroup attitudes.

Results of prior studies conducted in the late 1960s and 1970s to evaluate the

effects of multi-ethnic books have been inconclusive. Three studies found positive

effects of exposure to the stories (Lichter & Johnson, 1969; Singh & Yancey, 1974;

Yawkey & Blackwell, 1974), but one of the studies employed a multi-factor program containing film clips, biography readings, and discussions in addition to the storybooks (Singh & Yancey, 1974), and one study used only Black participants (Yawkey & Blackwell, 1974). Two additional studies (Best, Smith, Graves, & Williams, 1974; Walker, 1971) found no effects of the storybook readings, even when discussion of the stories was included. It was concluded that the stories may have been too old, too subtle, or simply not personally relevant to the children.

Thus, children's racial attitudes can be modified with discussion, but the effects may be stronger when the stories are personally relevant and provide the experience of "vicarious" interracial friendships. Considering how much time children spend with television compared to books, it is likely they may be more readily influenced by televised images and messages, because they are used to experiencing a "social reality" through the television screen. Using the "extended contact" technique may be useful in situations where there is little opportunity for direct contact. For example, if children live in racially homogeneous neighborhoods and have little contact at school with children of other races, such extended contact may be obtained through televised portrayals of interracial friendships.

Results from a study on the prejudice reduction program *Different and the Same* indicated that the televised curriculum was effective in changing children's knowledge about possible sources of prejudice and interpersonal conflict, as well as teaching them strategies for resolving prejudice-based interpersonal conflict (Graves, 1999). Furthermore, students who watched the educational videos focusing on fairness, awareness, inclusion, and respect showed more positive attitudes toward cross-race

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stimuli, and they were more likely to make cross-race friendship selections compared to their grade level controls. In this study, peers and adult models were also found to positively reinforce nonbiased solutions, which indicates that television does not exist in a vacuum. Other people, especially parents, may mediate the effects of the content.

The *Different and the Same* curriculum was specifically designed as a prejudice prevention curriculum, but unfortunately there are no similar programs currently available on television. Parents and educators can purchase the prejudice prevention videos, but they are expensive and many parents are not able to afford the cost of such programs. Although many television programs for children are advertised as promoting diversity and reducing prejudice (e.g., *The Puzzle Place* and *Sesame Street*), a problem with many of the television programs that portray interethnic cooperation and friendships is that their messages are too subtle. If the messages are not explicit enough, children may not pick up on them and the positive effects may be limited. This is evidenced by failed attempts to show significant results in previous studies. For example, Persson and Musher-Eizenman (2003) conducted two studies to investigate the impact of an in-school prejudice prevention program on children's ideas about race. The researchers assessed children's racial attitudes after watching a 10-minute segment of one of three television programs (Study 1) or after four viewings of the same 20-minute prejudice prevention program over a period of 3 weeks (Study 2). They found no change in children's pro-White bias from pre-test to post-test assessments. The authors indicated that explicit discussion about the programming content may be necessary in order to effect a significant change.

Similarly, Lovelace and Scheiner (1994) found that although White children who watched the *Sesame Street* race curriculum videos stated that they would like to be friends with a Black child, they still thought that their mothers, as well as the mothers in the videos, would be sad or angry about the friendships. Thus, these children perceived the parents to be prejudiced, although the episodes had portrayed hospitable, friendly, and inviting images of the parents. Without explicit positive and supportive communication about the cross-race friendships, the children did not perceive the parents as being supportive of such.

Media messages may not be the central determinants of children's racial attitudes, but they provide additional sources of confirmation of the racial values that are present in our society as a whole (Milner, 1975). Parents can help mediate and buffer this effect by teaching their children media literacy. Media literacy refers to reflective and analytical understanding of mass media (Brown, 2001). Media literacy education teaches children critical viewing skills, and it helps them understand and interpret the media content, as well as be skeptical about the reality and the meaning of such content. The following section provides a discussion of the ways in which parents can be involved in their children's media use and how such involvement can influence children's experiences and interpretations of the content to which they are exposed.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S MEDIA USE

There are several ways in which parents can be involved with their children's media use. Three common types of parent involvement -- often referred to as "parent mediation" -- have been identified: *restrictive mediation, coviewing*, and *active mediation*.

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The term "mediation" refers to the fact that the parent is acting as a buffer or mediator standing in between the streaming flow of television output and the child who is the receptor of this output. Restrictive mediation involves setting rules about children's media exposure (Nathanson, 2001; Weaver & Barbour, 1992). In terms of television, this would refer to rules regarding how much, what type, and when children can watch. Parents who are concerned about television content tend to make more rules about TV viewing (Bybee, Robinson, & Turow, 1982; Valkenburg et al., 1999; Warren, Gerke, & Kelly, 2002). Parents also impose more viewing rules on younger children than they do on older children and adolescents (Desmond, Hirsh, Singer, & Singer, 1987; Roberts & Foehr, 2004; Warren et al., 2002). Almost 90% of parents of children under the age of 6 years report that they regulate television, whereas only 46% of parents of teenagers regulate content (Rideout, Vandewater, & Wartella, 2003). Most parents have rules about when children can watch and how much they can watch, whereas fewer parents restrict content. For example, only half of the parents who participated in Annenberg Public Policy Center's *Media in the Home 2000* survey indicated that they restricted viewing based on television content (Woodard & Gridina, 2000). Thus, the remaining 50% of parents do not put any limits on their children's viewing.

"Coviewing" refers to parents watching television with their children. However, it does not imply that parents and children discuss television content: they are simply watching the same program in the same room. Some researchers have labeled this "unfocused guidance" (Bybee et al., 1982) or "nonrestrictive guidance" (Atkin, Greenberg, & Baldwin, 1991). Item analyses of various instruments used to measure parental involvement indicate that watching television with a child is not necessarily

related to more active strategies, such as discussions and explanations (e.g., Valkenburg et al., 1999). Research indicates that parents are only present about 25% of the time when children are watching television (Roberts & Foehr, 2004; St. Peters et al., 1991), and more often than not, they do not discuss the content (Comstock, 1991; Desmond, Singer, & Singer, 1990; Weintraub Austin et al., 1999). Furthermore, research shows that when parents and children watch television together, they usually watch adult-oriented programs rather than programs targeted at children (Huston et al., 1992; Kotler, Wright, & Huston, 2001; Lin & Atkin, 1989; St. Peters et al., 1991).

Researchers have documented that sibling coviewing is more common than parental coviewing (Alexander, Ryan, & Munoz, 1984; Lawrence & Wozniak, 1989; Roberts & Foehr, 2004; Van Evra, 1998). However, sibling coviewing does not seem to have a positive effect on children's understanding of television content (Haefner & Wartella, 1987; Wilson & Weiss, 1993). Even though older siblings may have a better understanding of the content, they do not voluntarily help their younger siblings interpret the program events. Thus, as indicated by this research, discussions and explanations by adults are necessary in order for children to properly process the educational content for its intended benefits.

The most highly recommended form of parental involvement is "active mediation," which refers to conversations that parents have with their children about the television content (Nathanson, 2001). Such conversations include discussing, explaining content, answering questions, and providing critical comments. More specifically, it involves three tasks: *categorization* (defining whether and how the content reflects reality), *validation* (endorsing or condemning content and character portrayals), and

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supplementation (pointing out useful information and providing additional information) (Messaris, 1982; Weintraub Austin et al., 1999). Active mediation is sometimes divided into *positive* and *negative mediation*. *Positive mediation* includes pointing out positive messages, highlighting good things television characters do, and agreeing with television messages (Nathanson, 2001). Essentially, *positive mediation* is interpreted as parental endorsement of the television content. In contrast, *negative mediation* includes disagreeing with televised messages, condemning behavior of television characters, and explaining that content or characters are not realistic. Thus, the goal of *negative mediation* is to make children be skeptical and think critically about what they watch and thereby be less likely to accept television content. By explaining to children that what they see on television may not be a true representation of how things are in the real world, parents may help to mediate the effects of televised negative racial portrayals.

Active mediation enables parents to influence their children's interpretation of the media content. Several studies have indicated that children who watch television with parents or older siblings learn more from educational programs when the co-viewers discuss the program and offer comments and interpretations of the content (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 1986; Huston & Wright, 1996). In general, active mediation has been associated with more critical viewing skills in children and this may in turn help buffer any negative effects of television content (Nathanson, 2001). More specifically, active mediation has been found to reduce negative gender stereotypes in children, increase children's learning from educational television, and decrease children's belief that television is representative of the real world (e.g., Austin, 1993; Corder-Bolz, 1980; Fisch, Truglio, & Cole, 2000; Messaris & Kerr, 1984). In addition, prosocial

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effects have been found to be stronger and more persistent when adults discuss and elaborate on the content (Mares & Woodard, 2001). Thus, television may serve as an opportunity for parents to discuss values and beliefs, including racial attitudes, with their children.

However, in reality, research shows that parents rarely discuss television content with their children (e.g., Alexander, 2001; Austin, Roberts, & Nass, 1990; Corder-Bolz, 1980; Gallup, 1989; Taras, Sallis, Nader, & Nelson, 1990; Vittrup, 2006). Parents' most common response to inappropriate or offensive content is to turn the channel or turn off the TV (Gallup, 1989; Weintraub Austin et al., 1999). However, by doing so, parents forego an important opportunity to mediate and discuss the offensive content with their children. Direct parent involvement has been found to be positively related to parents' beliefs about television's impact on children (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2002), which may be related to the so-called "third-person effect" (Davison, 1983). Parents may recognize that some media content can be a negative influence, but they do not believe that *their* child will be affected. The third-person effect has been studied as it relates to media violence, sexism, and racism (e.g., Duck & Mullin, 1995; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2002; Innes & Zeitz, 1988; Rojas, Shah, & Faber, 1996). Hoffner and Buchanan (2002) also found that parents believed the effect of televised violence on aggression in their own children would decrease with age, whereas the effect on other children would not decrease. In other words, parents may be less likely to use active mediation if they do not believe that television has much of an influence on their children.

In terms of encouraging positive use of television, parents appear to be even less involved. Forty-three percent of parents participating in Kaiser Family Foundation's

Media in the Home 2000 survey could not list even one program that they encouraged their children to watch (Woodard & Gridina, 2000). Furthermore, much of the television children and adolescents watch is not educational (Woodard, 1999). With the limited amount of ethnically diverse educational television programs, it is important that parents seek out such programs and encourage their children to watch them. Through these programs, children can be exposed to positive role models for inter-ethnic cooperation and friendships.

Most parenting and media researchers do indeed recommend that parents watch television with their children, discuss the content, restrict content and viewing amount, and use the TV ratings system available to them (Rankin, 2005). However, there is a considerable gap between what is recommended and what parents actually do. As mentioned above, one reason could be the third-person effect. Another reason may be that parents simply do not know the extent of their children's media use. Not only do they underestimate the amount of time their children spend in front of media screens, they also do not know exactly what type of content their children are exposed to (Oldberg, 1998; Roberts & Foehr, 2004; Vittrup, 2006). Certainly, the fact that so many children and adolescents have televisions in their bedrooms makes it much more difficult for the parents to monitor. In addition, parents may be unaware of the influences various types of media content may have on their children.

A more pragmatic reason for the lack of parental involvement was proposed by Roberts and Foehr (2004). These authors suggested that a lack of time and energy may play a big role in parents' inability or lack of desire to control their children's media use. Working a full-time job, taking care of basic household duties, and being a parent is very

time- and energy consuming. Thus, parents may simply forego their supervisory and regulatory responsibilities by letting screen media entertain their children. In fact, a large study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 45% of parents admitted to using the television to occupy their children if they had something important to do (Rideout et al., 2003). Similarly, Lenhart, Rainie, and Lewis (2001) found that adolescents from single-parent households were more likely to use the Internet for entertainment purposes, compared to adolescents from two-parent households, causing some researchers to speculate that screen media in these families may be used more as a babysitter or "companion" when the parent is busy.

An important consideration when discussing parental involvement in children's media use is the extent to which children are responsive to their parents' requests, restrictions, and suggestions. Active mediation and influence on media behavior is not a one-way street from parent to child. The family systems perspective recognizes the bi-directionality of parent-child relationships (Busch, 1990; Cowan, Powell, & Cowan, 1997). Parents influence their children and the children, in turn, influence their parents and other members of the family. This is evident in children's responses to parental mediation. Research shows that young children listen to their parents' suggestions and follow their advice. For example, almost all children (97%) who participated in Annenberg Public Policy Center's *Media in the Home 2000* study reported that they watched television programs that their parents had recommended. In general, parental restrictions on children's television viewing have resulted in children watching less television and watching better programs (Brown, Childers, Bauman, & Koch, 1990; Desmond, Singer, & Singer, 1990; St. Peters et al., 1991). Similarly, other studies have

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found that parental rules about all three screen media (television, video games and computers/Internet), and their enforcement of such rules, significantly impacted the amount of time young children spent with these media (Rideout et al., 2003; Rideout, Roberts, & Foehr, 2005). Simple steps, such as encouraging positive programming, discouraging negative or inappropriate programming, and enforcing media rules, can improve parents' involvement and enable children to develop better media habits and thereby deflecting some of the negative influences of the media. Thus, parents do have the ability to influence their children's media habits.

Parents' ability to influence children's media habits is also important in terms of intervention efforts. As mentioned previously, children do not readily adopt their parents' racial attitudes and may be more influenced by media portrayals of minorities. However, parents have the opportunity to curb their children's exposure to negative media portrayals and instead encourage the children's exposure to positive role models via educational programs featuring multiracial cast members and interracial friendships and cooperation. Such portrayals of interracial friendships may count as the vicarious experiences proposed by the extended contact hypothesis (Wright et al., 1997). Parent-child discussions alone may not be enough to persuade children that Black and White people hold equal status and that friendships between the two races are desirable, because children often see the two racial groups being more or less segregated on television, and as mentioned, children often use television as a "window on the world" (Barcus, 1983; Graves, 1999). However, if the parents' statements are backed up by televised portrayals of interracial friendships, children may find their parents' messages more credible.

SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESES

Many sources have been found to contribute to the development of children's racial attitudes. The most influential source of children's socialization is usually considered to be the children's parents or caregivers. However, considering the amount of time children now spend in front of television, this media source has received increased attention of researchers interested in how screen media influences children's socialization.

As mentioned, little research has been conducted on the effects of parent-child discussions about race and how such discussions may influence children's racial attitudes. In addition, very little work has been conducted on the impact of available children's television programs and whether they meet their stated goals of promoting diversity and reducing prejudice. Previous research on the topic has found a limited effect of television messages in terms of improving children's racial attitudes. Based on conclusions from previous research in both areas, the present study combined the use of parent-child discussions and educational television in an effort to improve children's racial attitudes. It is important to investigate how parents can use educational programs to initiate discussions with their children about race, a topic they may otherwise be reluctant to bring up.

Furthermore, in order to test the effects of various intervention efforts, there is a need for more experimental research. This study included the variables above in an experiment. Children were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: a group

consisting of children who watched racially diverse educational programs by themselves, a group consisting of children who watched the same programs with a parent and also discussed the content of the programs with the parent, a group of children who had similar discussions with their parents, but without the use of the television programs, and finally a control group. All children were between the ages of 5 and 7 years, which is a time at which children are starting to express strong racial attitudes toward minority groups (Aboud, 1988; Aboud & Doyle, 1996a; Bigler, 1999; Katz & Kofkin, 1997). Specifically, White children's attitudes towards Black people were measured.

In addition, this study sought to collect information about parent-child discussions about race, including the frequency and content of such discussions, as well as the impact such discussions might have on children's racial attitudes.

The study was centered around three main hypotheses. First, children's attitudes towards Blacks were expected to be associated with their prior exposure to Black people, either at school or in their neighborhood, as well as their prior conversations with their parents about race. Second, children who watched the racially diverse programs and discussed the content with a parent were expected to show more positive racial attitudes towards Blacks when comparing their post-test attitude scores to their pre-test scores. This effect was predicted to be stronger than any effect found in the Discussion-Only group, because the statements made by parents in the Video-and-Discussion group would be supported and enhanced by the televised images in the educational programming. Thus, children would see that there was consistency between what their parents were saying and what they saw on television, and they would therefore be more likely to endorse more positive racial attitudes. Third, children in the Video-and-Discussion and

Discussion-Only groups were expected to be better able to predict their parents' racial

attitudes following the experimental manipulation, compared to the predictions of

children who did not have such discussions with their parents, as well as their own

predictions when they were first assessed. Age differences were investigated, but no

specific hypothesis was proposed regarding the nature of such differences.

CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 99 White families with children aged 5-7 years participated in the initial part of the study. The families were recruited from a database of birth records kept at a university research laboratory. Three families withdrew from the study after the initial visit because they became "too busy" and were unable to complete the tasks or to schedule the follow-up interview, and two families withdrew because the parents did not want to have the required race-related conversations with their children. Additionally, one family was excluded from the analyses because their child was biracial. Of the remaining 93 participants (50 boys, 43 girls), there were 29 five-year-olds, 32 six-year-olds, and 32 seven-year-olds. Almost all (95%) of the parents were married or living together with a partner. Most of the families had either two (51%) or three (26%) children.

Forty-four percent of the mothers were homemakers. Most of the fathers (94%) and 24% of mothers were employed full-time. The rest of the parents worked part-time or were full-time students. Eighty-one percent of mothers and 87% of fathers had earned a 4-year college degree. Nearly   of the families (69%) had annual family incomes exceeding $75,000. Fifty-eight percent of the families reported that they lived in racially homogenous neighborhoods and the remaining 42% lived in racially heterogeneous

neighborhoods (defined as > 20% non-White residents; McGlothlin & Killen, 2005). Of the children who attended school, 46% of them went to racially homogenous schools and 54% went to racially heterogeneous schools. The frequencies of diversity reported by mothers and fathers can be found in Tables 1 and 2.

Ninety-three percent of the parents who came to the research lab were mothers and 7% were fathers. Only four families had both the mother and father present at the same time. It was assumed that the person who came to the lab would be the person showing the videos and having discussions with the children.

MATERIALS

Background information and pre-test racial attitudes were collected and assessed through parent surveys and child interviews. The intervention was conducted with videos and home diaries. Finally, the post-test racial attitudes were assessed with child interviews. The materials used for each of these components are described below. The main dependent and independent variables assessed with these instruments are listed in Table 3.

Parent Questionnaires

Both of the children's parents independently filled out three surveys. The first questionnaire, the Parent Questionnaire about Television and Race, was a basic qualitative survey assessing parental involvement in children's television use and diversity of the children's surroundings (see Appendix A). This questionnaire was developed specifically for this study.

The next scale was a 10-item questionnaire used to measure racial attitudes, called the Racial Attitudes Questionnaire (see Appendix B). It was based on the Pro-Black/Anti-Black Attitudes Questionnaire (PAAQ) originally developed by Katz and Hass (1988). Half of the items are worded to be consistent with humanitarian-egalitarian values (e.g., *This country would be better off if it were willing to assimilate the good things in Black culture*), and the other half are consistent with the belief that the problems experienced by Black people are due to their own shortcomings (*e.g., Blacks don't seem to use the opportunities that are given to them*). Responses to the statements were scored on a scale of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 6 (*Strongly Agree*). The statements indicating positive and egalitarian racial values (questions 1, 4, 7, & 8) formed the Pro-Black subscale, and the statements indicating some bias or prejudice (questions 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, & 10) formed the Anti-Black subscale. Katz and Hass (1988) reported their survey has good psychometric properties. Cronbach's alpha coefficients in this sample for the Pro-Black subscales were .56 for the mothers and .58 for the fathers. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the Anti-Black subscales were .75 and .71.

The third parent questionnaire, the Parental Mediation Questionnaire (PMQ, see Appendix C), was a 15-item questionnaire developed by Abelman and Pettey (1989) to measure parents' level of restrictive and active mediation. The items on this questionnaire have been found to load significantly on three factors corresponding to the three types of mediation discussed previously (factor loadings range from .63 to .87).

In addition, parents were given a Background Information Form, used to collect demographic data about the families (see Appendix D).

Child Interview

For the child interview, the *Black/White Evaluative Trait Scale* (BETS; Hughes & Bigler, 2007; see Appendix E) was used. The BETS was designed to measure children's positive and negative attitudes toward Black and White people. The scale consisted of 12 items, including positive (e.g., nice, honest), negative (e.g., unkind, dishonest), and neutral (curious, trusting) traits about each racial group. Children were asked how many people within each racial group possessed these traits. Examples of questions include, "How many Black people are nice?" and "How many Black people are dishonest?" Response options were on a 5-point Likert-type scale, and children's responses were scored on a scale of 0 (*Hardly* any) to 4 (*Almost* all). Four subscales were derived from this measure, calculated as follows: the positive items (nice, pretty, honest, generous, happy) for Blacks were added to form the Positive Black subscale, the negative items (selfish, cruel, unkind, awful, dishonest) were added to form the Negative Black subscale, and the neutral items (curious, trusting) were disregarded. The same was done to obtain the positive and negative subscales for Whites. Previous research has found reliabilities for the four subscales ranging from .56 to .82 (Hughes & Bigler, 2007). Acceptable levels were obtained for positive and negative evaluations of Blacks and for negative evaluations of Whites. The weaker reliabilities were found for the younger children (5 to 8 years old). For this sample of children, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the positive attitude subscales were .53 and .59 (for evaluations of Blacks and Whites, respectively), and for the negative attitude subscales were .75 and .71. Reliabilities across age groups are listed in Table 4.

The children were also interviewed with the *Prediction of Parental Attitudes* (PPA) measure (see Appendix F). This questionnaire was developed for this study. The 14 items were read to the children by a researcher who then recorded the children's answers. Children were then asked to predict their parents' attitudes toward Blacks and Whites, as well as to state whether they or their parents have friends of other races. The adjectives used on this questionnaire were a subset of the items from the BETS.

Children's predictions of their parents' attitudes were combined to form the Prediction of Parental Attitudes variable. For questions #1 (*Does your Mom/Dad like Black people?*), # 2 (*Does your Mom/Dad think Black people are nice?*), #5 (*Does your Mom/Dad want you to have Black friends?*), and #7 (*Do your parents have Black friends?*), an answer of "Yes" was given a score of +1, an answer of "I don't know" was scored a 0, and an answer of "No" was given a score of -1. Questions #3 (*Does your Mom/Dad think Black people are unkind?*) and #4 (*Does your Mom/Dad think Black people are dishonest?*) were reverse scored so that an answer of "Yes" was given a score of -1, an answer of "I don't know" was scored a 0, and an answer of "No" was given a score of +1. Scores were then added to form the Prediction of Attitudes subscale. Question #6 (*Do you have Black friends?*) was used as an individual item. Questions about parents' attitudes towards White people were not analyzed but included to make the questionnaire racially balanced.

The BETS and PPA instruments were used both for the pre-test and post-test of children's racial attitudes. During post-test measurements, all children except those in the control group were also asked additional questions about what they remembered and had learned from the videos or discussions (see Appendix G).

Videos

Five different video segments were chosen for this study. Previous studies have included fewer videos or shorter segments (see e.g., Lovelace & Scheiner, 1994; Persson & Musher-Eizenman, 2003). However, by watching five programs – one each day - children would be exposed to racially diverse programming for almost an entire week, and they would be exposed to different formats and different characters, which should make them better able to generalize the content to a wider context.

Parents in the first two experimental groups received a video tape containing five programs. Each program was approximately 10-15 minutes in length. The tapes for the Video-Only and Discussion groups contained episodes of *The Puzzle Place, Sesame Street* (two episodes), *Little Bill,* and *Zoom* . These videos were carefully chosen based on a racially diverse cast, the portrayal of interracial friendships, and a focus on positive relationships. Several of the videos have been used in previous research studies on racial attitudes (see e.g., Fisch et al., 1999; Lovelace & Scheiner, 1994; Persson & Musher-Eizenman, 2003).

Experimental Groups

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups. The first experimental group was a Video-Only group ($n = 26$), the second was a Video-and-Discussion group ($n = 26$), the third was a Discussion-Only group ($n = 24$), and the final group was a Control group ($n = 17$).

Instructions and Home Diaries

Parents were given a set of instructions and home diaries (see Appendices H and I), which contained instructions for the screening of the videos and having the conversations with their children. Parents in the Video-Only group were instructed to let the children watch the videos by themselves and to not talk to their children about the videos unless the children specifically asked them questions about the content of the videos.

Parents were asked to record in the diaries the essence of conversations they had with their children during or after the screenings or discussions. Parents in the Video-and-Discussion and Discussion-Only groups were given an additional handout containing instructions on what topics to discuss with their children each night.

All parents were asked to note in their diary specifically what they talked about (if applicable), what questions their children asked, and their perceived depth of the conversation. The purpose of these procedures were twofold: (1) to have some control over what the parents discussed with their children so that the groups would be fairly consistent; (2) to be able to monitor what parents actually discussed with their children and how much effort they put into it. For example, some parents in the discussion groups could choose to discuss more topics than requested, and some parents in the Video-Only group might discuss the content if their children asked questions. Having this information allowed for analyses to determine whether differences in the quality of discussion within groups affected the outcome. Diary information was coded by two independent coders. Coders agreed 95% of the time, and in the few instances where they did not, codes were assigned based on the agreement of a third coder.

PROCEDURE

At their initial visit to the research lab (Time 1), parents were asked to fill out a consent form (see Appendix J), and the 7-year-old children were asked to sign an assent form (see Appendix K) after the study was explained to them by a researcher or parent. Parents then filled out the questionnaires. While parents were filling out questionnaires and receiving instructions, their children were interviewed in a nearby room. The children were interviewed using the BETS and PPA.

At the end of the Time 1 session, parents in the Video-Only and Video-and-Discussion groups were given an edited videotape with the five episodes and provided with instructions on screening the episodes. Parents in the Video-Only, Video-and-Discussion, and Discussion-Only groups were also given the instructions and home diaries for their assigned group and given verbal instructions on how to fill out the diaries. In addition, parents who were married or living with a partner were asked to take home a packet of questionnaires for their significant other.

Parents in the two video groups were asked to show one program (out of the five on the video) on each of five different nights during the course of one week. Parents in the Discussion-Only group were asked to discuss the assigned topics once a day for five days during the course of one week. Finally, parents were asked to schedule a second appointment (Time 2) after the tasks had been completed, approximately one week after the initial lab visit.

At Time 2, parents were asked to return the videos, home diaries, and their partner's questionnaire. The children were interviewed again, using the same instruments

as the Time 1 interview session. Most (91%) parents and children showed up for the second interview 6-8 days after their first appointment. However, seven families waited 9-12 days, and one family did not return for 15 days. Those families who could not make it back to the lab within 6-8 days of their first appointment were asked to delay the commencement of screenings and/or discussions until 6-8 days before their follow-up appointment.

At the end of the second session, the parents and children were thanked and given a $10 Blockbuster gift card and toy.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

The results will be divided into Time 1 and Time 2 data. Time 1 results will be presented in the following order: Parental reports of television mediation, parents' and children's pre-test racial attitudes, correlates of prior interracial exposure, parent-child discussions about race, and finally children's pre-test predictions of their parents' racial attitudes. Next, Time 2 results, collected following the experiment manipulation, will be presented. Results pertaining to the central focus of this dissertation– the effects of educational videos and parent-child discussions–will appear first, followed by children's post-test abilities to predict their parents' racial attitudes.

TIME 1 RESULTS

Parental Mediation

Parents' involvement with their children's television use was assessed on the Parent Mediation Questionnaire (PMQ) as well as the Parent Questionnaire about Television and Race. Thirty-nine percent of mothers and 46% of fathers reported that they watched television with their children 1-3 times per week, and 29% of mothers and 26% of fathers reported watching with their children 4-6 times per week. See Table 5 for a breakdown of the frequencies. The most frequently reported co-viewed programs were

educational programs (63% of mothers & 45% of fathers) and cartoons (31% of mothers & 36% of fathers).

Most (88%) of the mothers and fathers reported that they talk to their children about the programs they watch. However, after examination of the content of their discussions, it became clear that many parents were merely discussing superficial features of the programs. Consequently, the data were re-coded to carefully identify only those parents who engaged in Active Mediation. This included parents who reported that they pointed out good and bad things, talked about character motivations, explained fiction versus reality, discussed morals and values, and/or emphasized educational aspects and learning opportunities. Those parents who reported talking about basic plot and characters, pointing out funny things, explaining rules of sports, commenting on clothes and hairstyles, or asking the child if he/she liked the show, were not classified as having engaged in Active Mediation. Following the re-coding, only 42% of mothers and 29% of fathers were considered as having engaged in Active Mediation with their children while watching television.

A principal components analysis was conducted on the PMQ to determine if the parents' reports of involvement corresponded to the previously identified levels of mediation: *Active, Restrictive*, and *Coviewing*. The Direct Oblimin rotation with Kaiser normalization was used in order to allow for correlated factors. Based on the specification of three types of mediation (Nathanson, 2001; Valkenburg et al., 1999; Warren et al., 2002; Weaver & Barbour, 1992), a forced three-factor solution was chosen. None of the factors extracted corresponded to the definition of *Coviewing.* Instead, the three factors extracted for both maternal and paternal mediation were labeled *Active,*

Restrictive, and *Elaborative*, and they explained 67% (mothers) and 60% (fathers) of the variance. *Elaborative Mediation* consisted of items indicating a higher level of *Active Mediation.* The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the mothers' scales were 0.83 (*Active*), 0.73 (*Restrictive*), and 0.81 (*Elaborative*). The reliability coefficients for the fathers' scales were 0.78 (*Active*), 0.77 (*Restrictive*), and 0.85 (*Elaborative*). Tables 6 and 7 list the descriptive statistics for the subscales.

Mothers' *Active Mediation* scores ranged from 3 to 21 ($M = 15.09$, $SD = 3.73$), their *Restrictive Mediation* scores ranged from 5 to 15 ($M = 12.70$, $SD = 2.43$), and their *Elaborative Mediation* scores ranged from 1 to 9 ($M = 6.78$, $SD = 1.93$). Fathers' *Active Mediation* scores ranged from 3 to 18 ($M = 11.29$, $SD = 3.29$), their *Restrictive Mediation* scores ranged from 4 to 15 ($M = 12.06$, $SD = 2.68$), and their *Elaborative Mediation* scores ranged from 0 to 12 ($M = 7.68$, $SD = 2.75$). Table 8 lists the means for the subscales. Thus, for mothers, *Active Mediation* was reported to be the most common technique, and for fathers, the most common technique was *Restrictive Mediation*.

To investigate child gender and age differences in mediation levels, a 2 (gender: male, female) x 3 (age: 5, 6, 7) ANOVA was conducted for each of the mediation subscales for both mothers and fathers. None of the analyses were significant.

When asked about their efforts to expose their children to racially diverse television programming, the majority of parents (56% of mothers & 77% of fathers) indicated that they "rarely" or "never" encourage their children to diverse programming. Only 17% of mothers and 4% of fathers reported that they "often" encourage their children to watch such programs. When they did suggest racially diverse programs, it was usually educational programs on PBS.

Parents' and Children's Racial Attitudes

Mothers' average score on the Pro-Black subscale was 18.58 (*SD* = .17, *range:* 11-25), and their average on the Anti-Black subscale was 15.60 (*SD* = 4.08, *range:* 7-26). Fathers' average score on the Pro-Black subscale was 18.46 (*SD* = 3.93, *range:* 9-27), and their average on the Anti-Black subscale was 16.41 (*SD* = 4.64, *range:* 6-28). Mothers' and fathers' scores on the Pro-Black subscale were not significantly different, $t(54) = -.83$, $p > .05$, nor were their scores on the Anti-Black subscale, $t(54) = -1.65$, $p > .05$. Mothers' and fathers' Pro-Black scores were significantly correlated, $r(86) = .45$, $p < .05$, as were their Anti-Black scores, $r(86) = .33$, $p < .05$. Mothers' and fathers' Pro-Black and Anti-Black scores were negatively correlated, $r(86) = -.82, -.49$, $ps < .05$, respectively.

A paired-samples t-test revealed children had significantly more positive attitudes of White people than of Black people, $t(93) = -5.91$, $p < .05$. Children's average score on the Positive White subscale was 15.77 (*SD* = 3.13, *range:* 7-20), and their average score on the Positive Black subscale was 14.01 (*SD* = 3.43, *range:* 3-20). Children's negative attitudes of Black people were not significantly different from their negative attitudes of White people, $t(93) = .68$, $p > .05$. Their average score on the Negative Black subscale was 6.20 (*SD* = 3.93, *range:* 0-15), and their average score on the Negative White subscale was 6.00 (*SD* = 3.52, *range:* 0-17). Children's Positive Black and Negative Black subscales were uncorrelated ($r[93] = -.15$, $p > .05$), and so were their Positive White and Negative White subscales ($r[93] = -.09$, $p > .05$).

In order to test for age and gender differences in children's evaluations, a 2 (gender: male, female) x 3 (age: 5, 6, 7) ANOVA was conducted for each of the four subscales. Child age was found to be significant in children's Negative White evaluations, $F(2, 90) = 6.36$, $p < .05$. The older children (6- and 7-year-olds) had an average score of 5.51 and 4.87, respectively, in contrast to the younger children's mean score of 7.82. Child age was not a significant factor in children's Positive Black, Negative Black, or Positive White evaluations. No gender effects or gender by age interactions were found.

When children's attitudes were correlated with their parents' attitudes, no significant relations were found. Children's Positive and Negative subscales for both Black and White evaluations were not significantly correlated with their parents' Pro- and Anti-Black scores ($rs = .11 - .21$, $ps > .05$).

Correlates of Prior Interracial Exposure on Children's Racial Attitudes

To assess the influences of prior exposure to people of other races on children's racial attitudes, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated for the association between children's racial attitudes and the diversity of their neighborhood and school. Diversity of neighborhood was positively correlated with children's negative attitudes towards Blacks, $r(89) = .25$, $p < .05$. Neighborhood diversity was not significantly correlated with children's positive attitudes towards Blacks, $r(89) = .04$, $p > .05$. Diversity of the children's school was not significantly correlated with children's positive or negative racial attitudes, ($r[89] = -.04$, $p > .05$, and $r[89] = .09$, $p > .05$, respectively).

With regard to interracial peer relations, 59% of mothers and 60% of fathers reported that their children had at least one Black friend. Sixty-three percent of the children also reported having a Black friend. However, most (87%) of the children who said they had a Black friend referred to a Black child at their school rather than a playmate in their neighborhood. Only 4% of the children indicated that they had visited one of their Black friends or had gone to their house. Children who reported having Black friends showed slightly higher positive ratings of Black people ($M = 14.16$) compared to the children without Black friends ($M = 13.03$); however a one-way ANOVA revealed that the difference was not significant, $F(1, 89) = 0.92$, $p > .05$. Children's negative ratings of Black people were unaffected by whether they reported having Black friends or not, $F(1, 89) = 0.81$, $p > .05$.

Most parents indicated that they had friends of other races. Sixty-nine percent of mothers and 78% of fathers reported having Black friends. However, only 53% of the children reported they were aware of their parents having Black friends. A one-way ANOVA indicated that children's knowledge of parents having Black friends was associated with their positive evaluations of Black people, $F(1, 76) = 5.07$, $p < .05$. Children who were aware that their parents had Black friends evaluated Black people more positively ($M = 14.81$) than children who reported not having such awareness ($M = 13.10$). This knowledge also affected the children's negative evaluations of Black people, $F(1, 76) = 4.52$, $p < .05$. Children who reported that their parents had Black friends evaluated Black people less negatively ($M = 5.59$) than children without such awareness ($M = 7.31$).

Parent-Child Discussions about Race

In order to assess children's exposure to discussions about race related issues, parents were asked to report whether they ever brought up the topic of race in their conversations with their children. When asked to respond "Yes" or "No" to this question, 65% of mothers and 42% of fathers reported that they discuss racial issues with their children. The follow-up question, asking them to specify what they discussed, was coded based on whether they made explicit references to the topic of race, such as using racial labels to describe people (e.g., Black/African-American; Chinese/Asian; Hispanic/Mexican-American), discussing racial issues such as stereotypes or discrimination, or referring to differences in appearance based on race. Coding revealed that only 33% of mothers and 20% of fathers had explicit discussions about the concept of race. Most commonly these parents mentioned issues such as discrimination, stereotypes, and skin color. Few parents (8%) mentioned historical issues, such as segregation and slavery. For a list of discussion topics and frequencies, see Table 9.

Many parents who initially answered "Yes" to the question of whether they discussed race indicated that their discussions did not specifically include the mention of race. Instead parents reported that they talked about "everybody being equal" and how "God loves everybody" (32%), how "everyone is different but what matters is what is on the inside" (16%), and topics related to languages and traditions in other countries (16%). These discussion topics and frequencies are also listed in Table 9.

Among the parents who reported not talking about race (35% of mothers, 58% of fathers), various reasons were given for why they chose not to. The most common reason was that the issue had not come up and they did not want to make a "big deal" out of it

(49%). Other reasons included that they wanted their children to be "colorblind" (17%), or they felt it would be better to treat everybody equal and let the children see that (9%). Some parents admitted that they did not think it was important to talk about race (19%), or they did not know how to talk about it in a positive way (6%). For a full list of reasons given and their frequencies, see Table 10.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to measure whether mothers' and fathers' reports of explicit discussions with their children about race were associated with their children's pre-test racial attitudes. A separate analysis was conducted for children's positive and negative evaluations. Mothers' explicit discussions about race were associated with more negative racial attitudes in their children. Children whose mothers used racial labels while discussing the topic of race had higher negative scores on their evaluations of Black people ($M = 5.56$, $SD = 3.76$) compared to the children whose mothers did not talk to their children about race ($M = 7.37$, $SD = 4.08$), $F(1, 86) = 4.20$, $p < .05$. In contrast, fathers' use of racial labels did not affect children's negative evaluations of Black people, $F[1, 68] = 0.90$, $p > .05$. Neither mothers' nor fathers' reported discussions about race were predictive of children's positive evaluations of Black people ($F[1, 86] = 0.41$, $p > .05$ & $F[1, 68] = 0.86$, $p > .05$, respectively).

Children's Ability to Predict Parents' Attitudes

Children's ability to predict their parents' attitudes was measured based on their answers to the questions on the Predictions of Parents' Attitudes questionnaire (PPA). At time 1, 48% of the children said that their parents liked Black people, 38% indicated that they did not know, and 14% said outright "No." There were no significant age

differences. When asked if their parents would want them to have Black friends, 67% said "Yes," 20% indicated that they were unsure, and 13% said "No." On this question, age differences were found. Older children (6- & 7-year-olds) were more likely to answer "Yes" (72% & 77%, respectively), compared to the 5-year-old children (57%). Comparatively, younger children were more likely to answer "No" (21%) or "I don't know" (21%).

Children's scores on the Prediction of Parental Attitudes variable ranged from -5 to +6, with a mean of 2.36 ($SD = 2.39$). When PPA scores were correlated with the positive and negative subscales of the BETS, significant relations were found between children's predictions of their parents' attitudes towards Black people and their own racial attitudes. Children's Prediction of Attitudes scores were positively correlated with their positive evaluations of Black people, $r(92) = 0.22, p < .05$, and negatively correlated with their negative evaluations of Black people, $r(92) = -0.21, p < .05$. However, children's predictions of parents' racial attitudes were not significantly correlated with the mothers' self-reported Pro-Black scores, $r(85) = 0.21, p > .05$, nor their self-reported Anti-Black scores, $r(85) = -0.14, p > .05$. Children's predictions of parents' racial attitudes were found to be significantly correlated with the fathers' reported Pro-Black scores, $r(61) = 0.33, p < .05$, but not with the fathers' Anti-Black scores, $r(61) = 0.10, p > .05$. For a list of correlations, see Table 11.

TIME 2 RESULTS

Approximately one week after the Time 1 data was collected, parents and children returned to the laboratory, for the post-test interview and to turn in the home diaries and questionnaires filled out by the spouse. Group differences were assessed between video-only, video-and-discussion, discussion-only, and the control group.

Parental Compliance with Instructions

Home diaries were inspected to assess whether parents had complied with instructions given to them regarding the videos and instructions. All parents in the video-only and video-and-discussion groups indicated that they had shown all five video segments to their children. However, the home diaries revealed a lack of compliance with the instructions when it came to the discussions. All parents were asked to rate their level of discussion each day, indicating whether they "Just mentioned" the topics provided to them, had "some" discussion with the child, or had an "in-depth" discussion with the child.

In the groups assigned to discussion with their children 46% ($n = 13$) of video-and-discussion parents and 44% ($n = 12$) of discussion-only parents admitted that they only briefly mentioned the comments and did not have any further discussion with their child. In addition, two families (5%) acknowledged that despite the instructions, they had no discussion with their child. Forty percent ($n = 9$) of video-and-discussion and 42% ($n = 10$) of discussion-only parents, indicated that they added a couple of comments or questions, but only 11% ($n = 3$) of the video-and-discussion and 9% ($n = 2$) of the discussion only groups engaged their children in in-depth conversation about the provided topics. Thus, 44 of the 49 (90%) parents in the discussion groups failed to

engage their children in in-depth discussions. See Figure 1 for a depiction of discussion levels.

Effects of Group Assignment on Children's Post-Test Attitudes

In order to assess the effects of group assignment on children's post-test racial attitudes, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted with group membership, child age and child gender as the independent variables, pre-test scores on the Black/White Evaluative Trait Scale (BETS) as the covariate, and post-test BETS scores as the dependent variable. A separate analysis was conducted for positive evaluations of Blacks and negative evaluations of Blacks. In terms of positive evaluations, the analysis did not reveal significant effects of group assignment ($F[3, 79] = 0.25$, $p > .05$) or age ($F[2, 79] = 0.29$, $p > .05$), nor were there any significant interactions ($F[6, 79] = 0.76$, $p > .05$). Similar results were found when analyzing children's post-test negative evaluations.

Due to the fact that only five participants engaged in in-depth discussions, there was not enough power to analyze the data based on discussion level. However, descriptive statistics indicated that children's racial attitudes did improve when parents discussed the content with them. For example, in the video-and-discussion group, children's Positive Black scores increased from a mean of 13.65 ($SD = 2.46$) to a mean of 15.90 ($SD = 2.19$) and in the discussion-only group, children's Positive Black scores increased from a mean of 14.60 ($SD = 3.17$) to a mean of 16.73 ($SD = 1.95$) when parents had "some" discussion with their children. When parents reported in-depth discussions with their children, the changes were even larger: children's Positive Black scores

increased from a mean of 13.67 (*SD* = 1.53) to a mean of 15.35 (*SD* = 1.15) in the video-and-discussion group, and in the discussion-only group, children's Positive Black scores increased from a mean of 11.00 (*SD* = 6.07) to a mean of 16.50 (*SD* = 4.90). However, only five families reported having in-depth discussions with their children. For more details on these descriptive statistics, see Tables 12 and 13. For an overview of the changes in scores based on discussion level, see Tables 14 and 15 and Figures 2 and 3.

Children's Post-Test Ability to Predict Parents' Attitudes

To assess the effects of the intervention on children's ability to predict their parents' racial attitudes, information from the post-test PPA questionnaire was analyzed. Following the intervention, children in the video-and-discussion group as well as children in the discussion-only group were less likely to answer that they were unsure of whether their parents liked Black people (15% and 12%, respectively), compared to the video-only (23%) and control groups (24%). A chi-square analysis revealed that the difference was significant, $X^2(3, n = 93) = 37.43, p < .05$. Similarly, children in the video-and-discussion and discussion-only groups were less likely to indicate that they did not know if their parents would approve of them having a Black friend (7% and 0%, respectively), compared to children in the video-only (12%) and control groups (24%). This difference was significant as well, $X^2(3, n = 93) = 60.48, p < .05$.

Children's answers of "Yes" or "No" to the PPA questions were compared to their parents' scores on the Pro-Black and Anti-Black subscales. Due to the fact that only one child indicated in the follow-up interview that his parents did not like Black people, and only five children indicated that their parents would not like for them to have Black

friends, there was not enough power to do statistical analyses on these questions. However, descriptive data revealed that fathers, whose children indicated that their parents would not approve of them having Black friends, had lower scores ($M = 15.00$) on the Pro-Black subscales, compared to children who indicated their parents had positive attitudes about interracial friendships ($M = 18.81$). Fathers whose children indicated they did not know about their parents' racial attitudes scored even lower on the Pro-Black subscale ($M = 13.50$). Mothers' Pro-Black scores were similar, regardless of whether children answered "Yes" ($M = 18.78$) or "No" ($M = 18.40$), but slightly lower when they had children who answered "I don't know" ($M = 17.11$).

For an overview of children's pre-test and post-test answers, see Figures 4-7. Figures 8 and 9 show the percentages of children expressing uncertainty about their parents attitudes based on group assignment.

Children's scores on the post-test Prediction of Parental Attitudes variable ranged from -2 to +6, with a mean of 3.57 ($SD = 2.25$). Children's post-test predictions were negatively correlated with fathers' Anti-Black scores for children in group 3 (discussion-only), $r(24) = -0.48$, $p > .05$. Children's post-test predictions were not significantly correlated with the mothers' reported Pro-Black or Anti-Black scores, nor with fathers' Pro-Black scores in either of the four groups.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to investigate the influences educational television and parent-child discussions may have on children's racial attitudes. Multiple agents of socialization influence children's development of racial attitudes. For this study, influences from children's parents were assessed in order to assess children's pre-test attitudes. Parents also reported on their children's previous exposure to diverse environments. An intervention was then conducted to determine whether educational videos and parent-child conversations about race could influence White children to hold more positive and less negative attitudes towards Black people. Preliminary information will be discussed first, followed by results of the intervention.

Television is often referred to as a "window on the world" (Barcus, 1983; Fitch, Huston, & Wright, 1993; Graves, 1999), and Wynter (2002) claimed that young people today are "the first generation that can truly be defined by the television they watch" (p. 182). Therefore, it is important to look at how children may learn about society through the lens of the television set. In addition, it is necessary to look at the role parents play in terms of interpreting the messages children may be exposed to through television. This study used an experimental methodology to test the effects of messages pertaining to race relations.

In order to assess the context in which young children receive messages about different racial groups, information was collected from parents regarding their involvement with their children's media use, as well as the conversations they had with their children about race. Parents also reported on the diversity of the children's environment.

The majority of parents reported that they were involved in their children's media use. Most of them reported watching with their children as well as discussing the content. However, many of the parents were merely discussing superficial characteristics of the programs rather than engaging in more interactive strategies. Prior research (e.g., Nathanson, 2001; Valkenburg et al., 1999; Warren et al., 2002; Weaver & Barbour, 1992) has identified different strategies parents use to mediate their children's television use, including active mediation, restrictive mediation, and co-viewing. In this study, co-viewing was not found to be a separate strategy. Instead, the three levels of mediation found were: active, restrictive, and elaborative. Elaborative mediation was considered to be a higher-level form of active mediation, which involves explaining the reality of television content and characters. It is possible that parents responded in more socially desirable ways and therefore may have over-reported their level of mediation. It is also possible that this higher-level mediation form was found because the majority of the participants were of higher socioeconomic status and higher levels of education. Previous studies have indicated that parents with college degrees are more likely to have rules about media access compared to parents with less education (Roberts & Foehr, 2004; Vandewater et al., 2005; Vittrup, 2006).

The most frequent strategy used by mothers was active mediation. On the other hand, the most frequent strategy used by fathers was restrictive mediation. This indicates that mothers may be more involved in their children's television use compared to fathers; something that has been found in previous research as well (Nikken & Jansz, 2006). Fathers, on the other hand, are more likely to forbid children from watching certain programs, as well as turning off the television if objectionable content appears.

Both mothers and fathers scored lowest on *elaborative mediation*, indicating that they are less likely to explain to their children the reality behind the programs and characters. Explaining the reality behind media content is considered the best tool for teaching children media literacy (Brown, 2001). Media literacy skills enable children to analyze and interpret the content as well as to be critical of what they are watching. Lack of mediation literacy skills can leave children vulnerable to negative content from television, one example being negative portrayals of ethnic minorities. If children are unable to critically evaluate the source of the content, as well as the reality of the content, they are likely to believe that what is portrayed on television mirrors real life. Thus, they may begin to adopt negative stereotypes and biases portrayed on the screen.

Parents may not be aware of the impact they can have on what their children learn from television. Parents can help interpret and "transfer" television messages that may otherwise be too subtle for children to pick up on without help from their parents. This includes messages pertaining to interracial interactions and racial equality. Most parents indicated that they rarely or never encourage their children to watch racially diverse television. Only 17% of mothers and 4% of fathers reported that they often encourage their children to watch diverse programs. Considering that television is overwhelmingly

white (Children Now, 2002; 2004), it is likely that children do not get much exposure to television content portraying interracial friendships and cooperation. Some parents indicated that they encouraged their children to watch "good" or "quality" educational programs, but that they would not encourage their children to watch a program simply because it had a diverse cast containing people of various racial groups. However, it is plausible that children can learn valuable lessons from watching people of different racial groups interacting in positive ways, and therefore the program can be educational even though the content of the program may not have specific educational lessons. This is an area of research that needs to be investigated further.

Another source from which children gain knowledge about other racial groups is the family. This study examined the associations between family members' racial attitudes. Mothers' and fathers' self-reported racial attitudes were found to be positively correlated. However, parents and children's racial attitude scores were found to be uncorrelated. These results mirror those of previous research (Aboud & Doyle, 1996a; Katz, 2003). Thus, despite what parents may think, children do not automatically adopt parental attitudes. Many parents may have very egalitarian and non-biased attitudes and therefore may assume that their children will adopt the same attitudes. This study provides some evidence that this is not the case. Considering the amount of racial stereotypes and prejudiced actions children are exposed to on television and at school, it is not surprising that children develop racial attitudes that are different from those of their parents, especially if they don't have prior positive experiences with people from other ethnic groups. Results of this study also confirmed prior research on ingroup bias (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961; Sigelman, Miller, & Whitworth, 1986; Yee &

Brown, 1992). The White children in this study rated White people more positively than they rated Black people, indicating an emerging ingroup bias towards their own racial group.

Although approximately three-fourths of the parents (69% of mothers & 78% of fathers) reported having Black friends, only about half of the children (53%) were aware of such friendships. Children who were cognizant of their parents' interracial friendships showed more positive and less negative evaluations of Blacks. This indicates that if children observe positive encounters between their parents and people of other races, they may be positively influenced. However, a causal link cannot be established with this study. Furthermore, it would predicate children being able to make such observations. If the friendly interracial interactions occur outside of the children's home (such as at the work place), children are not privy to these relationships. This may be the reason fewer children reported awareness of their parents having Black friends. In addition, the type of interaction would likely depend on the level of friendship (e.g., work acquaintance versus close personal friend), which in turn would influence children's perceptions of the interactions.

If children do not observe their parents' positive interracial interactions, parents would have to verbalize their racial attitudes in order for the children to reliably predict these attitudes. Many parents (64% of mothers & 41% of fathers) indicated that they talked to their children about race. However, when asked to report specifically what they talked about, most revealed that their conversations were about people in general, not race in particular. Parents were presumably under the impression that when telling their children that everybody is equal and not to pay attention to superficial characteristics, it

would relay the message that skin color is not an important way of distinguishing people. However, young children are unlikely to derive such specific meaning out of generalized statements due to their limited cognitive abilities. Instead, children need concrete examples. When a parent tells a child that "everybody is equal" or "God loves everyone, no matter what they look like," the parent may be referring to differences in appearance based on disabilities, loss of limbs, clothing style, behavior, religion, or other. Without making specific references to the topic of race, it is unlikely that children will understand that the parent intends to tell them that they should not discriminate against others based on their skin color.

Only a few parents indicated that they had explicit discussions with their children about race. The most common reason given for not talking about race was that the issue had not come up or the parents did not want to "make a big deal out of it." This might reflect a parent's discomfort with the topic, as well as the fear that if they bring it up, their children will think that it is important to distinguish people and evaluate them based on their racial identity. Other common reasons were that parents wanted their children to be "colorblind," or they felt it would be better to treat everybody as equal and let children see that. A central problem with this strategy is that our society is not colorblind. This fact can be observed in the media where minorities continue to lack representation on television, and they are often portrayed in stereotypical ways (Children Now, 2004; Graves, 1999; Greenberg, 1986). Other examples include the racial segregation of neighborhoods and schools and the persistent problem of racial discrimination in America (Fix & Turner, 1998; Iceland, Weinberg, & Steinmetz, 2002).

Another source of information regarding race relations assessed in this study comes from children's social environment. In order to assess children's exposure to people of other racial groups, parents were asked to report on the diversity of their neighborhood and their children's school. Interestingly, diversity of children's neighborhood was positively correlated with the children's negative evaluations of Black people. Children living in more diverse neighborhoods showed more negative racial bias. It is possible that children living in more diverse neighborhoods may have had negative experiences with Black people living there. For example, Farley (1995) noted that interracial contact may foster resentment among minority group members and reinforce stereotypes of group superiority in majority group members when individuals are not of equal status.

It is also possible that living in diverse neighborhoods makes segregation across racial groups more obvious, similar to what is often seen in schools. Black and White children often segregate themselves by ethnicity during their classroom breaks (Rogers, Hennigan, Bowman, & Miller, 1984). Diversity of children's school was not related to children's racial attitudes. This may be explained by the fact that school relationships, as well as neighborhood relationships, tend to be more superficial than primary relationships (Yancey, 1999). Yancey (1999) noted that superficial relationships, rather than more intimate relationships, allow majority group members to maintain negative stereotypes and myths about minority group members. When asked to report whether they had Black friends, 63% of the children said they did, but the majority of them indicated that it was a classmate rather than a close friend. Thus, many of the children in this study may not

have had primary relationships with Black people and therefore the intergroup contact they had experienced had not altered their racial attitudes.

Children who reported having Black friends showed slightly more positive evaluations of Blacks. Future research can benefit from asking the children more details about these reported friendships to figure out whether the closeness of the friendship (e.g., a playmate from the neighborhood versus a classmate in school), as well as the number of Black friends, influences children's attitudes. In addition, future research should include information about the racial attitudes of the children's friends. If children have friends who harbor negative attitudes towards people of other racial groups, it is likely that they may develop prejudiced attitudes.

EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERVENTION

Children's Racial Attitudes

It was hypothesized that the intervention would be successful in influencing children's racial attitudes, to the extent that children who were exposed to racially diverse television programs and discussions about race would show more positive attitudes towards Blacks. Unexpectedly, there were no significant group differences in children's post-test racial attitudes. Children in the video-and-discussion group did not show more positive or less negative attitudes towards Black people after the intervention. Children in the video-only and discussion-only groups did not show improved attitudes over the control group, either. However, after inspecting parents' reports of the level of depth of their discussions with their children, it appeared that many parents were not putting much effort into these discussions. In the groups involving discussions with their children,

almost half of the parents admitted that they only briefly mentioned some of the topics they had been requested to discuss with their children. Only 10% of the parents reported that they engaged their children in fairly in-depth discussions of the topics.

An intervention cannot be successful without proper participant compliance to the instructions. However, in line with the parents' pre-test reports of whether and why they chose to discuss or not discuss race with their children, the parents also seemed quite reluctant to have these requested discussions. When parents did have somewhat elaborate conversations with their children about racial diversity, either with or without the video content, the children's positive evaluations of Black people increased. This indicates that with proper compliance, the intervention can be effective. Thus, future research needs to include procedures to motivate and ensure that parents comply with the instructions. Perhaps parents need a demonstration on how to conduct the discussions, and it may be necessary to require parents to commit to having the discussions, either verbally or in writing. In addition, many parents may lack motivation to conduct race-related discussions with their children because they simply do not believe that their children are biased. Future research would benefit from surveying parents' predictions of their children's racial attitudes. If parents are made aware of the fact that their children may be biased, they may be more compelled to have conversations with their children regarding the topic of race and prejudice.

The fact that children in the video-only group did not show significantly improved racial attitudes, either, indicates that the limited exposure to programs featuring interracial friendships and cooperation was not enough to sway their beliefs. Many educational programs that are available for children to watch on television feature a

diverse cast (Children Now, 2002); however, most of the programs do not deal specifically with the topics of race and diversity, so the messages may have been too subtle for the children to pick up on. It may be that the messages need to be more clearly stated, or it may be that the children need extended exposure (e.g., one month) to these programs featuring a multiracial cast. Future research should investigate the effects of extended exposure to racially diverse television programs.

Improved Knowledge of Parental Attitudes

Prior to the intervention, many children were not aware of their parents' racial attitudes, as demonstrated in responses to such questions as whether their parents liked Black people and whether they would approve of the child having a Black friend. This is important, because children's perceptions of their parents' attitudes towards certain groups of people likely influence their own attitudes towards such groups. This assumption was supported by results of this study. Whereas children's racial attitudes were not shown to be significantly correlated with their parents' reported racial attitudes, children's *perceptions* of their parents' racial attitudes were significantly associated with their own racial attitudes. Children who perceived their parents to have more positive attitudes towards Black people were more likely to show more positive evaluations and less negative evaluations of Blacks. If a child is not sure whether his or her parents will approve of an interracial friendship, the child may choose to mainly interact with other same-race children. Furthermore, as stated previously, many parents reported that they would rather have their children learn through observation than through direct discussion about race. The results of this study indicate that many children either have not had the

opportunity to observe positive interracial interactions, or they have somehow formed the idea that their parents may not be supportive of such interactions. In fact, children's perceptions of their parents' racial attitudes were not correlated with their parents' actual reported attitudes, indicating that the children lack veridical knowledge of their parents' attitudes towards Black people.

It was expected that children who had race related discussions with their parents would be better able to predict their attitudes. After the intervention, children in the discussion groups were more certain of their parents' attitudes compared to children who did not have race-related discussions with their parents. This would indicate the utility of explicit parent-child discussions about race if parents want their children's attitudes to match their own. Parents often assume that their children have racial attitudes that are similar to their own, and they are surprised to find out that often their attitudes do not match (Katz, 2003). Without explicit parent-child conversations about race, children are more likely to learn from other sources, such as peers or the media which, as mentioned, can be highly biased. Allport (1954) commented that racism is more likely to be "caught" rather than taught directly and this study speaks to his observation. Children indeed may pick up on implicit negative messages about other racial groups because their parents are not willing to discuss this sensitive topic and do not expose their children to positive adult interracial interactions.

LIMITATIONS

The major limitation of this study was the lack of participant compliance during the intervention. It is difficult to predict what the outcome might have been if parents

had in fact adhered to the instructions given to them. Descriptive data are encouraging in that improvements were seen in the few children whose parents engaged in in-depth discussions. As mentioned, researchers should take careful measure to ensure participant compliance to instructions during an intervention like this.

Another limitation was the length of time for the intervention. Due to time limitations for the study, as well as parents' time constraints, the intervention was only conducted for one week. Attitudes, including racial attitudes, are hard to change. Thus, children may need more exposure to the vicarious interracial interactions and have more discussions with their parents before significant improvements can be seen.

The neighborhood and school diversity assessments used in this study may not have been accurate due to the fact that this information was gathered from parental reports of diversity. By having the parents report which school their child goes to, more accurate assessment of that school's diversity can be obtained via public reports.

Finally, this study may be limited in its generalization to other groups of the population due to the fact that only White families participated and most of them were middle-class families. Different results may be found with participants from other racial and socioeconomic groups.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A great deal of research has been conducted on various prejudice prevention programs implemented in schools (see e.g., Bigler, 1999). However, there is a gap in research on interventions focusing on family involvement. Thus, there is a need for more experimental research looking at how parents can influence improvements in children's

racial attitudes. Interventions in the schools may be easier to implement due to greater compliance of teachers compared to parents. However, a prejudice prevention program will likely be more effective if it includes discussions or activities in the child's home environment as well.

There is also a need for more research looking at the effects of multiple socializing agents on children's development of racial attitudes. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986), a child's development is impacted by a multitude of interdependent systems, including the child's family, peers, neighborhood, school, media, and societal values. Thus, when it comes to influencing a child's racial attitude development, it is not enough to look at effects from only one of these systems. Parents alone cannot control their children's exposure to race-related messages. Change may need to occur at several levels, including societal values and media content, before children are likely to grow up to be "colorblind." Future research needs to investigate the types of interventions that can effectively improve children's racial attitudes even when children are getting competing negative messages from their environment.

CONCLUSION

Prejudice continues to be a problem in our society, and in order to eliminate, or at least decrease its occurrence, it is important to intervene with children when they are young. As children get older, their racial attitudes and behaviors are likely to become more negative and harder to change (Stephan & Vogt, 2004). Children who adopt more egalitarian views will display less racial bias, and this in turn may lead to less racial tension in our society. As this study has documented, many parents choose not to discuss

the topic of race with their children. For some parents, television programs promoting

positive interracial interactions may be useful as a way to approach the subject, because

they can use the television content to initiate conversations with their children about race.

Although it appears that a number of parents are uncomfortable in discussing with their

children the topic of race and discrimination, this study sheds some initial light on the

role parent-child conversations may play in enlightening children about their parents'

racial attitudes. It is hoped that this study can be a springboard to future investigations

into the impact parents and educational television can have on improving children's racial

attitudes.

Notes

1. For the sake of simplicity, the term "race" is used in this paper to refer to both race and ethnicity.

2. The *Different and the* Same videos are sold as a set of nine 15-minute videos for $292, and *Groark Learns About Prejudice* from the *Getting Along with Groark* is $70 for one tape.

3. The *Sesame Street* videos were obtained directly from the Sesame Workshop. *Little Bill* and *Puzzle Place* were purchased online, and *Zoom* was a recent television recording.

Table 1

Percent of mothers (and fathers) rating how diverse their neighborhood and their

children's schools are

	Not very diverse	Somewhat diverse	Very diverse
Neighborhood	37 (39)	46 (41)	17 (20)
School	30 (32)	45 (43)	25 (25)

Table 2

Percent of mothers' (and fathers') reports of neighborhood and school diversity, based on

percentage of non-White (nw) neighbors and classmates

	<10% nw	11-20% nw	21-30% nw	31-40% nw	41-50% nw	>50% nw
Neighborhood	41 (38)	10 (20)	16 (12)	7 (8)	12 (14)	14 (8)
School	30 (22)	12 (24)	15 (19)	15 (10)	13 (11)	15 (14)

Table 3

Main independent and dependent variables

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
1. Child Age	1. Children's Racial Attitudes (BETS scores)
2. Prior Exposure to Black People	(Pre- & Post-Test)
3. Parent-Child Discussions About Race	2. Children's Ability to Predict Parents'
4. Group Assignment	Attitudes (Pre- & Post-Test)

Table 4

Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) for the BETS subscales by child age group

Age	Positive Black	Negative Black	Positive White	Negative White
5 (*n* = 29)	.39	.46	.54	.27
6 (*n* = 32)	.33	.77	.55	.74
7 (*n* = 32)	.74	.70	.70	.56

Table 5

Mothers' and fathers' reports (in percent) of how many times per week they watch

TV with their child

Frequency	Mothers $n = 90$	Fathers $n = 69$
Less than once	8	15
1-3 times	39	46
4-6 times	29	26
7-9 times	15	6
10+ times	9	7

Table 6

Parental mediation strategies by mothers derived from factor analysis extractions with loadings

Active		Restrictive		Elaborative	
Discuss TV character motivations	.69	Forbid certain programs	.83	Explain meaning of TV commercials	-.42
Point out good things actors do	.59	Restrict child's TV viewing	.80	Explain reality behind TV characters	-.80
Point out bad things actors do	.51	Set specific viewing hours	.50	Explain reality behind TV programs	-.86
Watch TV with child	.62	Specify programs not to watch	.74		
Encourage use of TV guide	.54	Switch channels on objectionable			
Talk about show while viewing	.89	programs	.67		
Discuss a show before/after viewing	.77				

Table 7

Parental mediation strategies by fathers derived from factor analysis extractions with loadings

Active		Restrictive		Elaborative	
Point out good things actors do	.48	Forbid certain programs	.84	Explain meaning of TV commercials	.72
Point out bad things actors do	.41	Restrict child's TV viewing	.63	Discuss TV character motivations	.71
Watch TV with child	.77	Set specific viewing hours	.57	Explain reality behind TV characters	.85
Encourage use of TV guide	.77	Specify programs not to watch	.75	Explain reality behind TV programs	.87
Talk about show while viewing	.70	Switch channels on objectionable			
Discuss a show before/after viewing	.55	programs	.74		

Table 8

Mean (SD) scores for Active, Restrictive, and Elaborative mediation,

as reported by mothers and fathers

Type of Mediation	Mothers	Fathers
Active Mediation	15.09 (3.73)	11.29 (3.29)
Restrictive Mediation	12.70 (2.43)	12.06 (2.68)
Elaborative Mediation	6.78 (1.93)	7.68 (2.75)

Table 9

Reported parent-child conversation topics related to race

Topic	Percent
Everybody equal/God loves everyone	32
Don't discriminate/Skin color doesn't matter	21
Everyone different/Inside is what matters	16
Languages/traditions of other countries	16
Historical issues (slavery, segregation)	8
Other/No answer	7

Table 10

Reported reasons for not discussing race with child

Topic	Percent
Issue hasn't come up	49
Not relevant/important	19
Doesn't want child to notice differences	17
Treat everybody equally and let child observe	9
Don't know how to talk about race in positive way	6

Table 11

Correlations between children's predictions of their parents' racial attitudes (PPA), their own evaluations of Black people (Positive Black and Negative Black) and their parents' reported attitudes (Pro-Black and Anti-Black)

	Positive Black	Negative Black	Pro-Black (Mom)	Anti-Black (Mom)	Pro-Black (Dad)	Anti-Black (Dad)
PPA	.21*	-.20	.20	-.15	.30*	-.08
Positive Black	n/a	-.15	-.11	.01	.13	.12
Negative Black		n/a	-.09	.11	-.28*	.21
Pro-Black (Mom)			n/a	-.28**	.46**	-.24
Anti-Black (Mom)				n/a	-.35*	.33*
Pro-Black (Dad)					n/a	-.48**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 12.

Means (SDs) of Video-and-Discussion group children's pre- and post-test racial attitudes,

divided by group and discussion level

Discussion level	1	2	3
Positive Black (Pre)	14.98 (4.17)	13.65 (2.46)	13.67 (1.53)
Positive Black (Post)	16.66 (2.71)	15.90 (2.19)	15.35 (1.15)
Negative Black (Pre)	7.00 (4.91)	6.45 (4.90)	5.33 (1.15)
Negative Black (Post)	5.93 (5.06)	6.36 (3.93)	5.00 (1.73)

Table 13

Means (SDs) of Discussion-Only group children's pre- and post-test racial attitudes,

divided by group and discussion level

Discussion level	1	2	3
Positive Black (Pre)	14.00 (3.87)	14.60 (3.17)	11.00 (6.07)
Positive Black (Post)	13.33 (1.58)	16.73 (1.95)	16.50 (4.90)
Negative Black (Pre)	8.00 (2.29)	6.10 (3.21)	2.00 (1.41)
Negative Black (Post)	7.53 (3.54)	5.27 (3.60)	1.00 (1.41)

Table 14

Changes in positive and negative evaluation of Blacks, by discussion level, for participants in the Video-and-Discussion group

Discussion Level	Pre-Test Positive Evals	Post-Test Positive Evals	Pre-Test Negative Evals	Post-Test Negative Evals
1	15.96	16.36	6.26	5.91
2	13.63	15.90	6.45	6.36
3	13.66	15.43	5.00	3.33

Table 15

Changes in positive and negative evaluation of Blacks, by discussion level, for participants in the Discussion-Only group

Discussion Level	Pre-Test Positive Evals	Post-Test Positive Evals	Pre-Test Negative Evals	Post-Test Negative Evals
1	14.00	13.70	8.00	7.50
2	14.50	16.70	6.33	5.50
3	11.00	16.50	2.50	1.00

Figure 1

Amount of race-based discussion reported by parents.
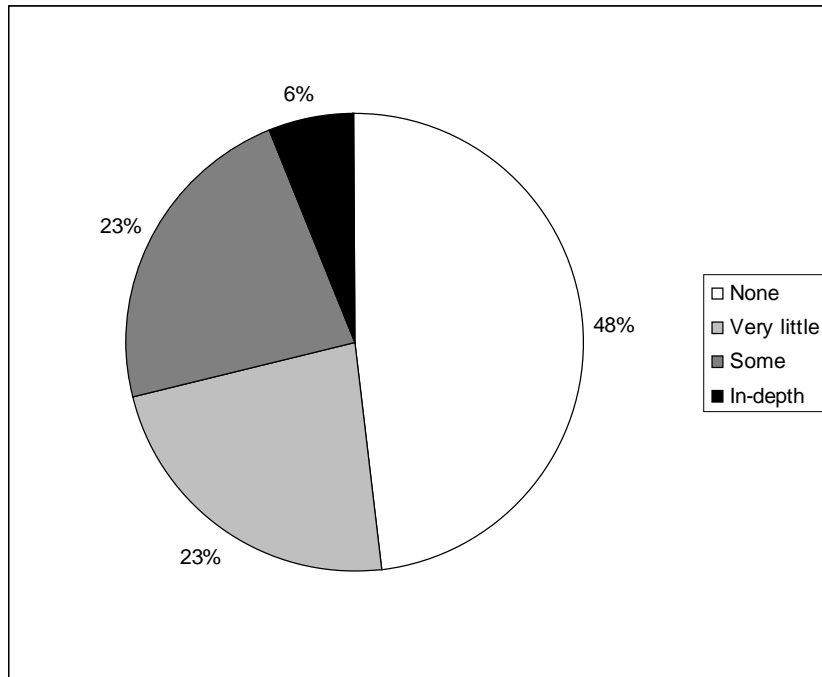
Figure 2

Change scores in evaluations of Blacks, based on discussion level (Video-and-Discussion group).
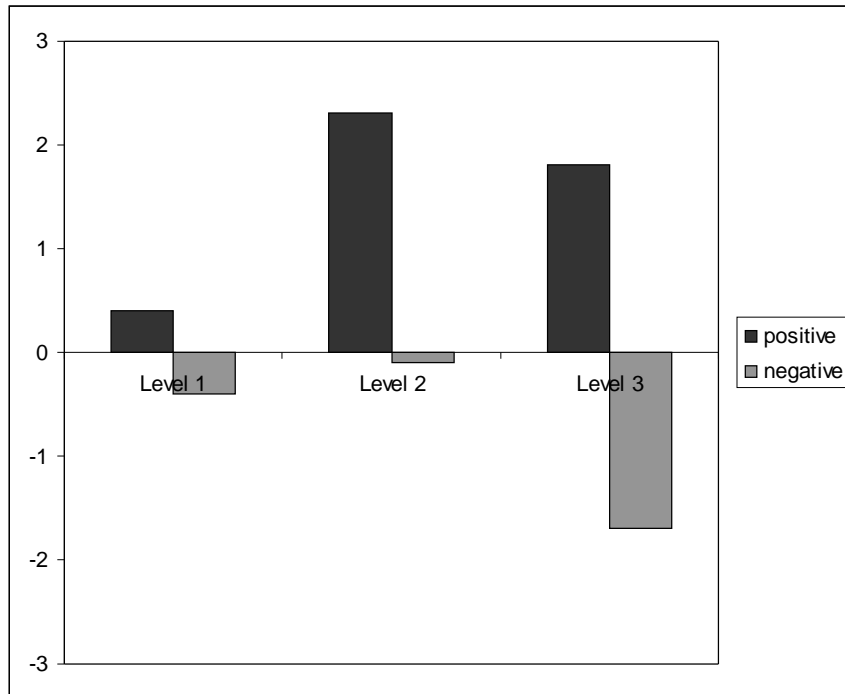
Figure 3

Change scores in evaluations of Blacks, based on discussion level (Discussion-Only group).
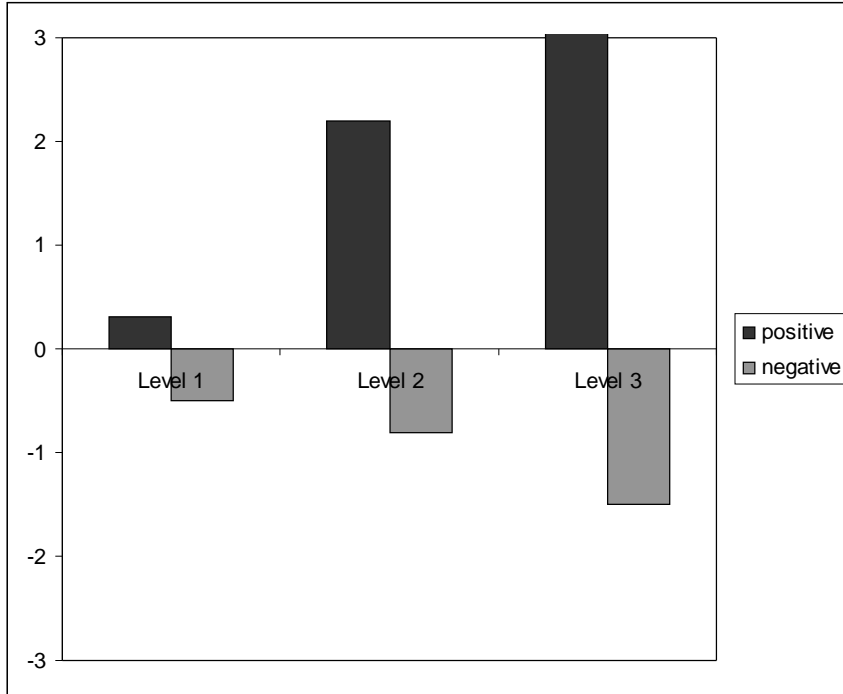
Figure 4

Video-and-Discussion group children's reports of whether their parents like Black people.
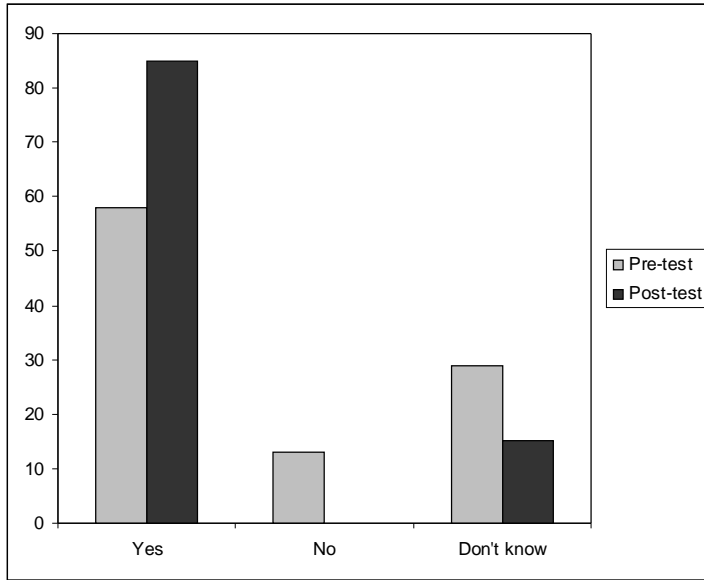
Figure 5

Discussion-Only group children's reports of whether their parents like Black people.
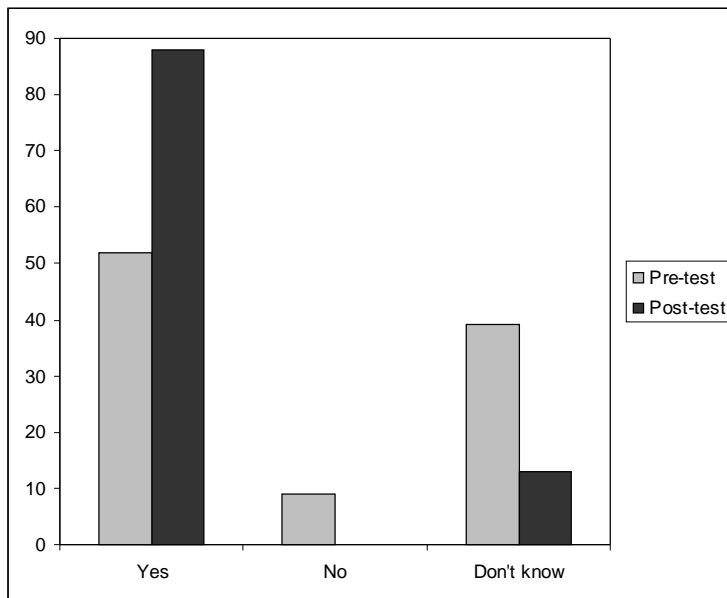
Figure 6

Video-Only group children's reports of whether their parents like Black

People.

Figure 7

Control group children's reports of whether their parents like Black people.
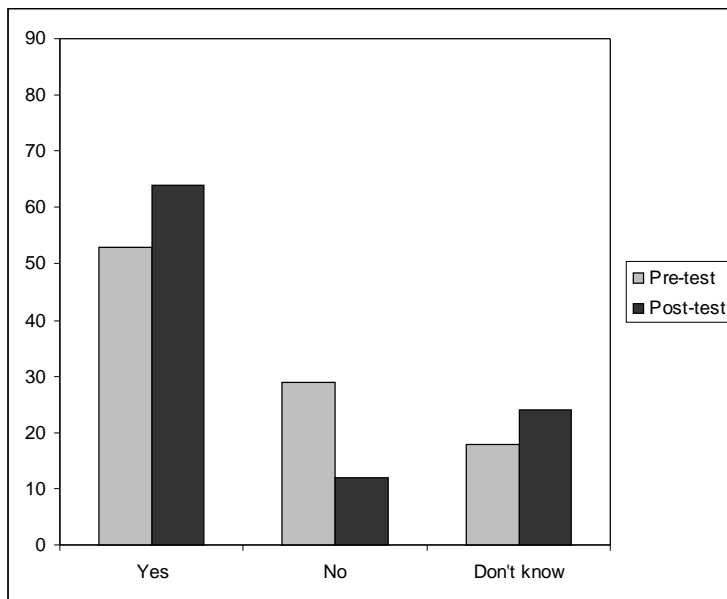
Figure 8

Percent of children indicating post-test unawareness of whether their parents like Black people, based on group assignment.
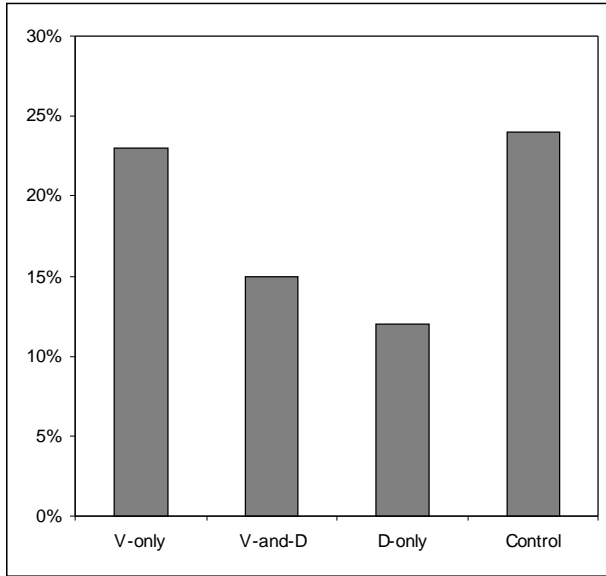
Figure 9

Percent of children indicating post-test unawareness of whether their parents will approve of them having Black friends, based on group assignment.
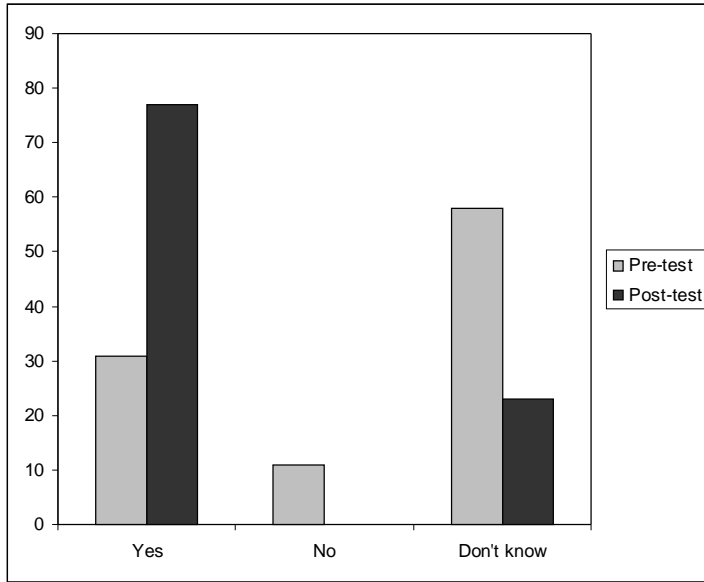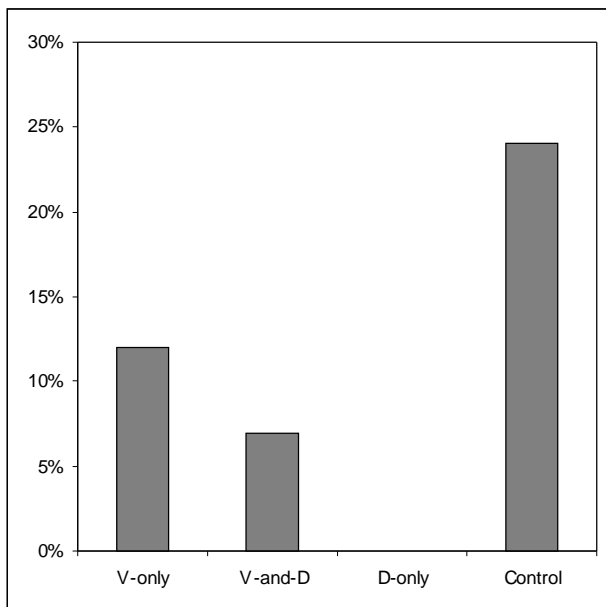
APPENDIX A

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT TELEVISION AND RACE

What is your relation to the child? ___ Mother   ___ Father   ___ Other: _____

1a. How many times per week do you watch television with your child?

Less than once ___   1-3 times ___   4-6 times ___   7-9 times ___   10+ times ___

2. What types of television programs do you watch with your child?

_____

_____

3. Do you talk to your child about the television programs they watch?   YES   NO

4. If yes, what do you talk about? _____

_____

_____

5. Who usually (most often) picks the programs you watch with your child?

Myself or other parent ___   Child ___   We usually decide together ___

6. Do talk to your child(ren) about race?   YES   NO

7a. If yes, what do you talk about, and do you use racial labels (e.g., Black/African-American, Mexican/Latino, Asian, White, etc.)?

_____

_____

7b. If no, why do you choose not to? _____

_____

_____

8. How often do you encourage your child(ren) to watch racially diverse TV programs?

RARELY   SOMETIMES   OFTEN

9. If so, what types of programs do you encourage your child(ren) to watch?

_____

_____

10a. Does your child (who is participating in this study) have close friends of other races? (i.e., visit each other and/or play together on a regular basis)

YES   NO

10b. If yes, how many and what race(s)? _____

11a. Do you have friends of other races?   YES   NO

11b. If yes, how many and what race(s)? _____

12a. How racially and ethnically diverse is the school your child goes to?

Very diverse ___   Somewhat diverse ___   Not very diverse ___

12b. If very or somewhat diverse, what other racial and ethnic groups are represented at your child's school?

_____

12c. What percentage of children in your child's school are non-White (give your best estimate)?

_____

13a. How racially and ethnically diverse is the neighborhood you live in?

Very diverse ___   Somewhat diverse ___   Not very diverse ___

13b. If very or somewhat diverse, what other racial and ethnic groups are represented in your neighborhood?

_____

13c. What percentage of children in your neighborhood are non-White (give your best estimate)?

_____

RACIAL ATTITUDES QUESTIONNAIRE*

The following is a standard racial attitudes questionnaire. Remember, the information you provide is not linked to your name and all information is kept strictly confidential.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below:

		Strongly Agree			Strongly		
Disagree							
RA-1	Black people do not have the same employment opportunities that Whites do	1	2	3	4	5	6
RA-2	The root cause of most of the social and economic ills of Blacks is the weakness and instability of the Black family	1	2	3	4	5	6

* Due to copyright restrictions, only a sample of the questionnaire items are included

APPENDIX C

PARENTAL MEDIATION QUESTIONNAIRE*

Please answer the following questions about your child's television viewing by circling the response that most appropriately applies to your home.

How often do you……

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
PM-1. Forbid certain programs	0	1	2	3
PM-2. Restrict child's TV viewing	0	1	2	3

* Due to copyright restrictions, only a sample of the questionnaire items are included

APPENDIX D

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM

1) Are you: Mother of child ____   Father of child ____

2) Your Race: African-American ___   Caucasian ___   Hispanic ___   Asian ___   Other: ___

3) Number of children living with you: ____

4) Age and sex of each child: _____   _____   _____   _____

5) Your Marital Status: Single, Never Married ____   Divorced/Separated ____
   Widowed ____   Married/Living together _____

6) Your Occupation: Homemaker ____
   Work Full Time ____   (Type of work: _____)
   Work Part Time ____   (Type of work: _____)
   Student ____

7) Your Education: 1-8 grade ____   9-12 grade ____
   Vocational or some college ____   College graduate (4-year) ____
   Graduate school/Professional degree ____

8) Your Spouse/Partner's occupation: Homemaker ____
   Work Full Time ____   (Type of work: _____)
   Work Part Time ____   (Type of work: _____)
   Student ____

9) Your Spouse/Partner's education: 1-8 grade ____   9-12 grade ____
   Vocational or some college ____
   College graduate (4-year) ____
   Graduate school/Professional degree ___

10) Family annual income: Below $15,000 ___ $15,000-$29,999 ___ $30,000-$44,999 ___
    $45,000-$59,999 ___ $60,000-$74,999 ___ $75,000-$89,999 ___
    $90,000 or above ___

11) Religious affiliation: Baptist ___   Presbyterian ___   Agnostic or Atheist ____
    Catholic ____   Mormon ____   Jewish: ____
    Lutheran ____   Methodist ____   Other (specify): _____

12) How many times per month do you attend church: Never   <1   1-2   3-4   5+

13) How often do you talk to your child about religious beliefs: Never   Sometimes   Often

14) How many times/month does your child attend Sunday school? Never   <1   1-2   3-4   5+

APPENDIX E

BLACK/WHITE EVALUATIVE TRAIT SCALE

1b. How many Black people are nice?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

2b. How many Black people are pretty?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

3b.   How many Black people are selfish?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

4b.   How many Black people are cruel?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

5b.   How many Black people are curious?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

6b.   How many Black people are honest?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

7b.   How many Black people are generous?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

8b.   How many Black people are unkind?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

9b.   How many Black people are awful?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

10b.   How many Black people are trusting?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

11b.   How many Black people are happy?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

12b.   How many Black people are dishonest?

        Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

1w. **How many White people are nice?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

2w. **How many White people are pretty?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

3w. **How many White people are selfish?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

4w. **How many White people are cruel?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

5w. **How many White people are curious?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

6w. **How many White people are honest?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

7w. **How many White people are generous?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

8w. **How many White people are unkind?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

9w. **How many White people are awful?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

10w. **How many White people are trusting?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

11w. **How many White people are happy?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

12w. **How many White people are dishonest?**

Almost all (4)   A lot (3)   Some (2)   A few (1)   Hardly any (0)

APPENDIX F

PREDICTION OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES

1. Does your Mom (Dad) like Black people?   Yes   No   Don't know

2. Does your Mom (Dad) think Black people are nice?   Yes   No   Don't know

3. Does your Mom (Dad) think Black people are unkind?   Yes   No   Don't know

4. Does your Mom (Dad) think Black people are dishonest?   Yes   No   Don't know

5. Does your Mom (Dad) want you to have Black friends?   Yes   No   Don't know

6. Do you have Black friends?   Yes   No

7. Do your parents have Black friends?   Yes   No   Don't know

8. Does your Mom (Dad) like White people?   Yes   No   Don't know

9. Does your Mom (Dad) think White people are nice?   Yes   No   Don't know

10. Does your Mom (Dad) think White people are unkind?   Yes   No   Don't know

11. Does your Mom (Dad) think White people are dishonest? Yes   No   Don't know

12. Does your Mom (Dad) want you to have White friends? Yes   No   Don't know

13. Do you have White friends?   Yes   No

14. Do your parents have White friends?   Yes   No   Don't know

15. Does your Mom (Dad) like Mexican people?   Yes   No   Don't know

APPENDIX G

CHILD INTERVIEW – FOLLOW-UP (Groups 1-2)

1. What did you learn from the videos you watched?

2. What do you remember about the kids from the Puzzle Place and what did you learn?

3. What do you remember about the Sesame Street episodes (e.g., Visiting Ieshia and Visiting Jamahl), and what did you learn?

4. What do you remember about Little Bill and what did you learn?

5. What do you remember about Zoom, and what did you learn?

CHILD INTERVIEW – FOLLOW-UP (Group 3)

1.   What did you learn from the discussions you had with your Mom/Dad?

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX H

CHILDREN'S TV STUDY
INSTRUCTIONS – GROUP 1

We sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in our study. Please follow these directions for showing the videos to your child. You have been given a videotape with 5 different programs. Please show one program each night for 5 nights (preferably within the next week). You have also been given a Home Diary that we would like for you to fill out each night following the showing of the video.

Your appointment to come back to the Children's Research Lab is: _____
If you provide us with your e-mail address, we will send two e-mail reminders this week to remind you to show the videos to your child and to remind you of your appointment. When you return to the lab for your follow-up appointment, please bring the videotape and your Home Diary. During the follow-up appointment, we will interview your child again, and you will receive a small reward for participating in our study. The follow-up appointment will take approximately 20 minutes.

Instructions for showing the videos:

Below is a list of the programs included on the video. Please show one program each day. Start the video for your child and let your child watch the video by him/herself. If a younger sibling wants to watch the video as well, that is fine. However, we ask that you do not discuss the program with your child. If they ask you specific questions about the videos, you may of course answer their questions.
When your child has finished watching the program, please fill out the attached Home Diary for the appropriate day.

DAY 1: *Puzzle Place: Accentuate the Positive*
DAY 2: *Sesame Street: Visiting Ieshia*
DAY 3: *Sesame Street: Play Date*
DAY 4: *Little Bill: Neighborhood Park*
DAY 5: *Zoom*

CHILDREN'S TV STUDY
INSTRUCTIONS – GROUP 2

We sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in our study. Please follow these directions for showing the videos to your child. You have been given a videotape with 5 different programs. Please show one program each night for 5 nights (preferably within the next week). You have also been given a Home Diary that we would like for you to fill out each night following the showing of the video.

Your appointment to come back to the Children's Research Lab is: _____
If you provide us with your e-mail address, we will send two e-mail reminders this week to remind you to watch the videos to your child and to remind you of your appointment. When you return to the lab for your follow-up appointment, please bring the videotape and your Home Diary. During the follow-up appointment, we will interview your child again, and you will receive a small reward for participating in our study. The follow-up appointment will take approximately 20 minutes.

Instructions for showing the videos:

Below is a list of the programs included on the video. Please watch one program each day with the child. We ask that you sit with your child throughout the entire program and discuss the content based on the instructions below. If a younger sibling wants to watch the video as well, that is fine.
When you have finished watching the program, we ask that you continue talking to your child about the video content (as instructed on attached form). Then, please check off each topic you talked about and include additional information.

DAY 1: *Puzzle Place: Accentuate the Positive*
DAY 2: *Sesame Street: Visiting Ieshia*
DAY 3: *Sesame Street: Play Date*
DAY 4: *Little Bill: Neighborhood Park*
DAY 5: *Zoom*

CHILDREN'S TV STUDY
INSTRUCTIONS – GROUP 3

We sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in our study. Please follow these directions for having the requested conversations with your child. We ask that you have these conversations with your child each night for 5 nights (preferably within the next week). You have also been given a Home Diary that we would like for you to fill out each night following the discussions.

Your appointment to come back to the Children's Research Lab is: _____
If you provide us with your e-mail address, we will send two e-mail reminders this week to remind you to show the videos to your child and to remind you of your appointment. When you return to the lab for your follow-up appointment, please bring your Home Diary. During the follow-up appointment, we will interview your child again, and you will receive a small reward for participating in our study. The follow-up appointment will take approximately 20 minutes.

Instructions for showing the videos:

Attached is a list of the conversation topics we would like you to discuss with your child. Following the conversation, please check off each topic you discussed and fill out the additional information.

CHILDREN'S TV STUDY
HOME DIARY – GROUP 1

After your child has watched the assigned program each night, we ask that you fill out this short home diary to indicate which discussions you may have had with your child about the videos. If you did not discuss anything and if your child did not ask any questions, please write "N/A".

DAY 1: *Puzzle Place: Accentuate the Positive*

What date & time did your child watch this episode? _____

What (if anything) did you talk to your child about during or after the showing of the video?

What questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 2: *Sesame Street: Visiting Ieshia*

What date & time did your child watch this episode? _____

What (if anything) did you talk to your child about during or after the showing of the video?

What questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 3: *Sesame Street: Play Date*

What date & time did your child watch this episode? _____

What (if anything) did you talk to your child about during or after the showing of the video?

What questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

_____

DAY 4: *Little Bill: Neighborhood Park*

What date & time did your child watch this episode? _____

What (if anything) did you talk to your child about during or after the showing of the video?

What questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 5: *Zoom*

What date & time did your child watch this episode? _____

What (if anything) did you talk to your child about during or after the showing of the video?

What questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

CHILDREN'S TV STUDY
HOME DIARY – GROUP 2

DAY 1: *Puzzle Place: Accentuate the Positive*

What date & time did you and your child watch this episode? _____

Discussion topics during and after video:

___ Even if people look different than you or talk different, they are still good people and you can be their friend. Children of different races can be great friends.

___ Everybody is special no matter where they are from and no matter what race or color they are. White children, Black children, Mexican children, and Asian children are all special

___ Would you like to be friends with the children from Puzzle Place? (if child says no, ask why. Then focus on equality and being friends with children of other races).

___ It is important to respect other people and get along with them, no matter what race they are or what country they are from.

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted: _____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 2: *Sesame Street: Visiting Ieshia*

What date & time did you and your child watch this episode? _____

Discussion topics during video:

___ Ieshia and her family seem like very nice people. It's nice of them to invite Olivia over to their house and cook for her.

___ Even if people look different than you or talk different, they are still good people and you can be their friend. Children of different races, such as White and Black children, often have a lot of things in common and like the same things even though they come from different backgrounds.

___ Would you like to be friends with Ieshia and the children from her neighborhood? (if child says no, ask why. Then focus on equality and being friends with children of other races).

___ Everybody is special no matter where they are from and no matter what race or color they are. White children, Black children, and Mexican children are all special

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted:
_____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 3: *Sesame Street: Play Date*

What date & time did you and your child watch this episode? _____

        Discussion topics during and after the video:

___ Even if people look different than you or talk different, they are still good people and you can be their friend. Children of different races, such as White children and Black children, often have a lot of things in common even though they come from different backgrounds.

___ Everybody is special no matter where they are from and no matter what race or color they are. White children, Black children, and Mexican children are all special.

___ Would you like to be friends with Jamahl or one of the kids from his neighborhood? (if child says no, ask why. Then focus on equality and being friends with children of other races).

___ It is important to respect other people and get along with them, no matter what they look like and what race they are from.

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted: _____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 4: *Little Bill: Neighborhood Park*

What date & time did you and your child watch this episode? _____

Discussion topics during and after the video:

___ Little Bill and his family look like very nice people. It's nice of Little Bill
and his friends to clean up the park.

___ Children of different races are friends and play together in the park. Some of
them are Black, some of them are White, some of them are Asian, and some
are Mexican, and they all play together.

___ Would you like to be friends with Little Bill if he lived in our
neighborhood? (if child says no, ask why. Then focus on equality and being
friends with children of other races).

___ Everybody is special no matter where they are from and no matter what race
or color they are.

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child
responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted:
_____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 5: *Zoom*

What date & time did you and your child watch this episode? _____

Discussion topics during and after the video:

___ The children from Zoom are very nice and very smart. They all seem to know a lot of things, and they are all nice to each other and to other people.

___ Children of different races, such as White, Black, and Asian, get along and they have a lot of fun together. Even though they look different, they are all very nice and very smart.

___ Would you like to be friends with the children from Zoom if they lived in our neighborhood? (if child says no, ask why. Then focus on equality and being friends with children of other races).

___ Everybody is special no matter where they are from and no matter what race or color they are. White children, Black children, Asian children and Mexican children are all special.

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted: _____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

CHILDREN'S TV STUDY
HOME DIARY – GROUP 3

DAY 1:

What date & time did have this discussion with your child? _____

___ Even if people look different than you or talk different, they are still good people and you can be their friend. Children of different races, such as White children and Black children, can be great friends.

___ Everybody is special no matter where they are from and no matter what race or color they are. White children, Black children, Mexican children, and Asian children are all special

___ Would you like to be friends with the children who have a different skin color than you – for example Black children? (if child says no, ask why. Then focus on equality and being friends with children of other races).

___ It is important to respect other people and get along with them, no matter what race they are or what country they are from.

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted: _____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 2:

What date & time did have this discussion with your child? _____

___ Some people on TV (or at school) have a different skin color than us.
However, most of them are still nice people, and they are still like us on the
inside.

___ Even if people look different than you or talk different, they are still good
people and you can be their friend. Children of different races, such as White
and Black children, often have a lot of things in common and like the same
things even though they come from different backgrounds.

___ Would you like to be friends with some of the children (on TV/at school/in
our neighborhood) who are from another race? (if child says no, ask why.
Then focus on equality and being friends with children of other races).

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child
responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted:
_____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 3:

What date & time did have this discussion with your child? _____

___ Even if people look different than you or talk different, they are still good people and you can be their friend. Children of different races, such as White children and Black children, often have a lot of things in common even though they come from different backgrounds.

___ It is important to respect other people and get along with them, no matter what they look like and what race they are from.

___ Everybody is special no matter where they are from and no matter what race or color they are. White children, Black children, and Mexican children are all special.

___ It is important to respect other people and get along with them, no matter what they look like and what race they are from.

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted: _____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 4:

What date & time did have this discussion with your child? _____

___ There are people (on TV/at school/in our neighborhood) who look different than us – for example Black people or Asian people – but they are still nice people and they do good things.

___ Children of different races are friends and play together in the park. Some of them are Black, some of them are White, some of them are Asian, and some are Mexican, and they all play together.

___ Everybody is special no matter where they are from and no matter what race or color they are. White children, Black children, Mexican children, and Asian children are all special

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted: _____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

DAY 5:

What date & time did have this discussion with your child? _____

　　　Discussion topics during and after the video:

___ Some people have a different skin color than us, but they are still nice people. Children from different races can have a lot in common and can play together at school or on the playground.

___ Children of different races, such as White people and Black people, often like the same things even though they come from different backgrounds.

___ Would you like to be friends with a Black child if he or she moved to our neighborhood? (if child says no, ask why. Then focus on equality and being friends with children of other races).

___ Everybody is special no matter where they are from and no matter what race or color they are. Some children look different or speak differently than us, but they are all special.

___ Other topics. Please explain in the space below:

How would you rate your discussions about the topics above?

___ Mentioned the topics to child
___ Mentioned the topics and had some discussion with child (i.e., child responded and added a few comments or questions)
___ Had in-depth discussion with child. Indicate how long the discussion lasted: _____ minutes

What specific questions did your child ask (related to the video content)?

CONSENT FORM
CHILDREN AND TELEVISION

You and your child have been invited to participate in a research study on children's reactions to and experiences with child-oriented television programs. We hope that this study will help us better understand how children perceive messages from television programs. In addition, we are interested in children's racial attitudes based on prior and current television exposure. This form provides you with information about the study. Participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate and allow your child to participate, you may discontinue participation at any time. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and you will not be asked to provide any identifying information about yourself or your child. We expect to have 90 children and their parents participating in this study.

If you choose to participate and allow your child to participate, your child will be interviewed twice in the research lab concerning his or her racial attitudes. These interviews will take approximately 15 minutes. You and your child will also be asked to view five child-oriented television programs and/or have related conversations over the course of one week. Each program is approximately 15-20 minutes in length. As a parent or guardian, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about your child's television experiences and related discussions you have had with your child, as well as a demographic questionnaire.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you and your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Yours and your child's responses will not be linked to his or her name or to your name in any written or verbal report of this research project.

Your decision to participate and to allow your child to participate in this study will not affect your or your child's current or future relationship with The University of Texas at Austin. If you have any questions about the study, please ask me. If you have any questions later, you may call the Holden Lab at (512) 475-7882. If you have any questions or concerns about your and your child's participation in this study, please contact Lisa Leiden, Chair of the University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Research Participants at (512) 471-8871.

You may keep the copy (first page) of this consent form. Please return the attached page with your signature. You may use the contact information below if you have any questions at any point before, during or after your and your child's participation in this study.

Principal Investigator   Faculty Supervisor
Brigitte Vittrup, Graduate Student   George Holden, Ph.D.
(512) 475-7882 (lab)   (512) 475-7882 (lab)
(512) 431-6764 (cell)   holden@psy.utexas.edu
vittrup@mail.utexas.edu

You are making a decision about participating and allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and agreed to participate and allow your child to participate in the study. If you later decide that you wish to withdraw your permission for your child to participate in the study, simply let us know. You may discontinue participation at any time.

_____

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

_____

Printed Name of Child

_____   _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

APPENDIX K

ASSENT FORM
CHILDREN AND TELEVISION

I agree to be in a study about my experiences with television and people from other races. This study was explained to me by my mother/father/guardian and he/she said that I could be in it. In the study, I will be asked questions about how I feel about people from other races. The only people who will know about what I say are the people in charge of the study.

I will also watch five programs or have five discussions with my parents during the next week and I will come back to the research lab next week where they will ask me questions again.

Writing my name on this page means that I read this page, or the page was read to me, and that I agree to be in the study. I know what will happen to me. If I decide I don't want to be in this study, all I have to do is tell the person in charge. No-one will be mad at me if I decide to quit the study.

_____

Child's Signature   Date

_____

Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

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