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Sarah A. Matlock
White Anti-Racism in the Context of
Parenting

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores how White parents who identify as anti-racist raise their

children from an anti-racist perspective. Twenty White parents were interviewed and asked

about what anti-racism means to them, their childhood experiences involving race and racism,

and how they attempt to incorporate anti-racism values into their parenting. They were also

asked about their perspective on their White children's racial awareness and on the impact of

race and racism on their White children. The participants' neighborhood and school choices, and

the racial make-up of their child's friendship circles were discussed.

The findings revealed that many of these White parents who identified as anti-racist

underestimated their child's understanding of race and racism and the degree to which their

children internalize White superiority and negative stereotypes about people of Color. Although

the vast majority of parents interviewed are attempting to socialize their children to have anti-

racism values and have taken some important steps, the practices they reported were often more

consistent with colorblindness. Conversations about race tended to affirm difference as positive

without teaching about systemic inequality, and most parents described their own anti-racism

efforts as targeting inter-personal racism rather than institutional. Racism was also evident in

many of their housing, school and childcare decisions.

WHITE ANTI-RACISM IN THE CONTEXT OF PARENTING

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how White parents who identify as anti-racist raise their children from an anti-racist perspective. A foundational principle in the anti-racist literature is that being a White anti-racist requires an on-going process of understanding White privilege and supremacy, and engaging in meaningful action against racism at a personal, inter-personal, and community level (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006; Raible, 2009). This research project aims to identify how anti-racist Whites who are also parents of White children apply these aspects of the process to their parenting. I will explore their perspectives on anti-racist parenting, their own childhood experiences regarding learning about racism, and their perspectives on the racial experiences of their White children.

There are various sights of entry into one's racial socialization, including schooling, media, and relational experiences in families and communities (Derman-Sparks, 1989). I have focused on the family as one primary site of racial socialization. The parent-child relationship is an influential domain in which racism can be reinforced or interrupted. Our earliest relationships deeply impact how we relate to others throughout our lives. It follows that parents' experiences with race and anti-racism work will shape how they interact with and perceive their children's racial world, and in turn the child's experiences being raised with this perspective will impact how they interact with and understand their racial environment. I am interested in understanding how these factors intersect by exploring anti-racist parenting.

My research question is: How do White parents who identify themselves as anti-racist socialize their children with these values? I hope to identify the following in the interview

process: How do they talk about race and racism with their children? How little or how much do they believe their children internalize racist messages around them? Do they attempt to minimize the internalization of White supremacy? If so, how? Do they model anti-racism in their own lives, relationships and work? If so, how? Do they engage in anti-racist activism? If so how? How do their responses align with previous studies about White people, child development and racism? I will critically analyze their responses for themes, patterns and anomalies that might provide insight into antiracist approaches to parenting.

What happens when White children are raised by anti-racist parents, and/or taught using un-biased curricula and given and anti-racist education? How does this change their worldview and behavior? I am at this point unaware of research on the subject but I theorize that anti-racism in parenting and early education would have a significant positive impact on White children. I presume that if white children grow up with anti-racism values, they will more frequently attempt to interrupt racism.

To date there has been little written about anti-racist child rearing in general, White anti-racist parenting in particular. My research is focused on White children because they have countless material and psychological privileges based on race. White children and their needs have been given primacy historically; they have had access to education in which (overwhelmingly) their teachers are White, their progress is judged based on White standardized measures, and they are taught that White people gave our country it's best characteristics. A discussion about how to raise White children to recognize and challenge these privileges needs to occur. While there is a significant body of literature about multi-cultural and un-biased curricula, this is partly reflective of the fact that racism has historically been treated as an issue between Whites and people of Color, or among people of Color, but not as a problem for the

White community as a whole. James Baldwin, among others, took the position that racism is a White problem when he stated, "There isn't any Negro problem; there is only a white problem." Baldwin called for Whites to stop blaming people of Color recognize that racism is their issue (as cited in Wander, Martin & Nakayama, 2008, p.1). In response to these calls, anti-racist educators are addressing the issues of how to work with White children and provide them with needed information to grow-up with less internalized-dominance and the ability to counter the racist messages of the culture at large. Tatum (1997) refers to these messages as the "smog" of racism that none of us can avoid breathing. Clearly, White parents play an important role in how they prepare their children to navigate this smog, however due to the dearth of literature, it is difficult to answer the question of what is effective anti-racist parenting at this juncture. Whites who identify as anti-racist are relatively rare, and further research is needed to for understanding their experiences and motivations.

The NASW code of ethics, states that as social workers we have an obligation to work for social justice. Much of our individual and clinical work will be in vain until racism, homophobia, classism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of oppression are eliminated. For White people like myself (social workers or not) who have benefited financially and socially from racism there is added responsibility to take up the cause against it. Tatum (1997) states that the task of interrupting racism in not a White task alone, but that the greater access Whites have to the social institutions in need of transformation obligates them to take action: "To whom much is given much is required" (p.12). If social workers agree that we must understand oppression in order to effectively do our work, then we must understand our own roles in the dynamics of inequality and be willing to challenge them. For White social workers this means directly addressing racism and White privilege. As a White woman, I am necessarily limited in this

study by my own Whiteness, as this aspect of my identity has profoundly shaped my experiences and worldview and has undoubtedly impacted my interpretations of the interviews. Still, I hope that my findings will further the pursuit of anti-racism, contribute to the on-going body of literature on this subject, and provide valuable information to parents, educators, or others who have children in their lives.

Definition of Terms

Race is a social construct of arbitrary categories based on physical characteristics. It has been well established for many years that there is no scientific basis for the concept of race, however it endures as a way we define and assign value to people in the United States. For this study *racism* as defined by DiAngelo (2010) includes: "Economic, political, social and institutional actions and beliefs that systematize and perpetuate unequal distribution of privileges, resources and power between Whites and people of Color. This unequal distribution benefits Whites and disadvantages people of Color overall at the group level" (p.7). Anyone can have *prejudice,* preconceived assumptions based on misinformation or stereotypes, however personal bias does not have as much impact if laws, institutional policies, and dominant cultural messages don't uphold it. It is the combination of racial prejudice and access to economic resources and decision-making that leads to the institutionalization of policies that maintain white dominance. Notions of power and privilege can only be addressed if we broaden our definition of racism from the individual prejudice perspective (Tatum, 1997).

White privilege is defined as the systematic advantage of being White (McIntosh, 1989). These privileges are unearned, and include both major and minor advantages such as greater access to housing and education, and not being followed around and suspected of stealing when shopping in a department store. Feminist scholar Peggy McIntosh referred to White privilege as

"the invisible knapsack" and outlined many advantages she had such as being late to a meeting or chewing with her mouth full and not having it attributed to her race. This privilege was not asked for, and largely remains unacknowledged as it is taken for granted as "the way it is" for White people. As Tatum (1997) points out, it is painful for many White people to acknowledge their privilege as it directly challenges our deeply held beliefs about individualism and meritocracy.

White supremacy is a term usually associated with overtly racist and militant White power groups. However when I refer to it in this paper, White supremacy is defined more broadly as the ideology that White people are superior to people of Color (Mills, 1997). Some of the ways in which White supremacy has been upheld throughout history are violence, exclusion policies, legal rulings and Jim Crow laws. However, White supremacy is an all-encompassing aspect of American culture and the ideology and practices of White supremacy continue today, in less formal and often less explicit ways. Whites are socialized to feel they are superior despite any conscious desires, wishes, or beliefs to the contrary (hooks, 2008; Marty, 1999; McIntosh, 1989; Picca & Feagin, 2007). One example of this internalized superiority is described in Johnson and Shapiro's (2003) work explicating the racialized discourses used by White parents to describe "good" neighborhoods and schools. Without referring directly to race, White parents in their study spoke in coded terms by justifying their choice of neighborhood and schools based on "goodness." Whiteness was a marker of quality in their minds, and conversely, Blackness was an indicator of deficiency. Their work supports hooks' (2008) description of the rhetoric of White supremacy as a "fantasy of whiteness" in which White become synonymous with goodness (p.22).

W*hiteness* is a concept that arose from the earliest European settlers, for whom it was necessary to define who was White and who was not in order to rationalize and protect the economic investments in exploiting non-European labor and land. The belief by the first settlers that other European groups such as the Irish had inborn difference and were "savages" was applied to the indigenous people of North American and the racialization of the United States began to take shape (Takaki, 1993). The parameters of Whiteness have constantly changed and who did or did not qualify as "White" was dependent on the time period and the vested interests of the ruling class in maintaining their position. As waves of immigrants arrived from southern and eastern Europe, most were at first marginalized and treated as inferior. For example, Jewish, Irish, Italian, Russian, and Polish immigrants were considered other races. However, these "non White" European immigrants soon learned that the key to American citizenship meant becoming "White" (Roediger, 2008).

In addition to shedding their own ethnic identities to assimilate to the dominant Protestant norm, the European immigrants also separated themselves from African and Asian Americans. As Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006) state, "Pressure to distinguish and distance oneself from African and Asian Americans sowed seeds of the intransigent racism that has undermined the unity and effectiveness of the labor movement and has deeply imbedded a racist ideology into our national psyche" (pp.32-33). Reflecting on the social and economic advantages of Whiteness, critical race scholar Cheryl Harris (1993) coined the phrase "Whiteness as property." This phrase captures the reality that being perceived as White carries more than a mere racial classification. It is a social and institutional status and identity imbued with legal, political, economic and social rights and privileges that are denied to others.

Colorblindness is a standpoint that one "does not see color" or does not treat people differently based on race. However, despite this ideology it is widely documented that children start to categorize people by race from early childhood (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Park, 2010; Quintana & McKown, 2008; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001) and studies have shown that many White children frequently discriminate (Monteiro, Franca, & Rodrigues, 2009). Colorblindness is problematic as it fails to acknowledge differences in identity and experience and also ignores structural inequalities. Colorblindness is widely recognized among whiteness scholars as a form of modern racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2010).

Anti-racism as defined by anti-racist educators Derman-Sparks and Brunson Phillips is thinking and acting with a specific consciousness, self-awareness, knowledge and skill to challenge, interrupt, and eliminate manifestations of racism within one's sphere of influence. Because Whites' relationship to racism differs from that of people of Color, the steps towards becoming anti-racist also differ. For people of Color, becoming anti-racist usually involves examining what aspects of oppression have been internalized, and how not to collude with racism and oppression. For White people, becoming anti-racist involves un-learning internalized domination (Derman-Sparks & Brunson Phillips, 1997; DiAngelo, 2006).

A *White ally* is generally defined as a White person who engages in anti-racist behavior. The work of John Raible (2009), professor and anti-racist activist, helps explain the concept of a White ally. Raible devised a list of what constitutes "ally behavior" based on his observations of white people he knew and with whom he "had some degree of trust" (p.1) The extensive list included: "I raise issues about racism over and over both in public and private, I recognize my own limitations as a white person doing this work, I hold high expectations of people of Color, I demonstrate impatience with the rate of change" and so on (p.1). He also created a list of areas

in which White people seemed to get stuck, such as "I intellectualize about the struggle rather than live it daily, I prefer to spend anti-racist time and energy dealing with my personal feelings and issues rather than moving the anti-racist agenda forward" (p. 2).

Derman-Sparks and Brunson Phillips further Raible's definition by their description of anti-racist ally behavior for Whites as having a realistic understanding of White identity and it's privileges and a new, positive perspective on their cultural identity. Allies remain open and humble, and continue the process of reflection and examination about white participation in racism. Reflection alone, however, is inadequate: someone is considered an ally when they are consistently *active* in anti-racism work within their lives and community.

Chapter II

Literature Review

A Brief History of Racism in the United States

Racism has been woven through the structure of U.S. society since the nation was founded, but pre-colonial societies of the Americas did not divide themselves in this way, rather they categorized social groups based on religion or class status. However, the U.S. was formed around the values of freedom and equality irrespective of class status or religion, radical new ideas at the time (Jefferson & Waldstreicher, 2002; Roediger, 1997). Yet the White European colonists, seeking religious and personal freedom, enacted genocide on the native people, appropriated their lands for their own profit and benefit, and began importing African people as slaves. The nation's ideology was in direct contradiction to it's professed values; the U.S. economy was based on slavery and displacement (Jefferson & Waldstreicher, 2002; Roediger,

1997). To resolve the dissonance inherent in this divide between belief and practice, the ruling class turned to science to find justification for their action.

"Scientific" racial classification systems originated in Europe based out of zoological frameworks extended to human kind. This system was used to socially and politically secure Whites in a position of superiority on the hierarchy and justify the subjugation of others, said to be less developed or inferior (Wander, Martin & Nakayama, 2008). Anthropologists found what they considered evidence of the "cultural, social, technological and spiritual inferiority of nonwhite races throughout human history" (p.30). What most Americans would see today as a vehemently racist perspective was widely accepted by White society at the time as the natural order. It was perceived to be the mission of the White race to "civilize and Christianize" the savages and heathens (Wander, Martin & Nakayama, 2008). There was widespread resistance to colonization and slavery by indigenous and Black people, including fierce rebellions in the U.S. and other colonies in the Americas. Many accounts of Black views of Whites as violent barbarians were published from this time period onward (hooks, 2008; Roediger, 1997; Takaki, 1993). There were also White men and women who opposed slavery and fought against White supremacy in the U.S., some giving their lives (Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 2003).

Racism Today

Today after decades of reforms and on-going resistance by people of Color (and some Whites) the most horrific and overt forms of racism such as slavery, Jim Crow and lynching have ended or diminished. However, deep disparities in many aspects of health, income, housing, and educational opportunities between White's and people of Color including Blacks, Latinos and Indigenous peoples still exist and have been widely documented (Feagin, 1991; Wise, 2010).

Despite the tremendous wealth that exists in the U.S., harsh poverty is widespread and does not fall evenly across racial lines.

These disparities are evidence that racism continues to be deeply structured into society, at both the micro and macro levels. People of Color report experiencing racism and discrimination in their everyday lives, yet they are often blamed for social problems (Feagin, 1991; Forman, Williams & Jackson, 1997; Pitts, 2008). This racism occurs outright, in the form of hate crimes, racial slurs, or jokes as well as in unsettling subtle interactions with Whites, such as strained smiles or discomfort and awkwardness towards people of Color (Sue et. al, 2007). Racism also manifests structurally, for example through disparities in mortgage lending, unequal funding of urban vs. suburban schools, overrepresentation of Black males in special education, and different sentencing for the same infractions in schools and in the criminal justice system (DiAngelo, 2010).

Despite these facts, most White people deny the existence of racism altogether, or may see it as individual acts of ignorance, rather than as a societal and systemic problem (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Wise, 2010). White people have the privilege of not being discriminated against based on race, and don't tend to view themselves as racial beings, or view racism as their problem. Of course Whites are not a monolithic group, and it is important to acknowledge diversity among them. Privilege operates differently depending on where one is socially located in other aspects of identity such as economic and class status, ability, gender or sexual orientation or religion (DiAngelo, 2006). Still white people are granted freedom to navigate everyday life with a level of comfort and ease that is not generally experienced by people of Color. As W.E.B. Dubois commented, the lowest wage White workers were still provided additional public and psychological "wages" in the form of better treatment, access to schools,

jobs, and other aspects of public life (as cited in Wander, Martin, & Nakayama, 2008, p.33).

Dubois statement still holds true: a targeted status in other categories does not negate that being

White automatically grants material, psychological, and social advantage in U.S. society.

Aversive racism.

As noted above, despite a near universal endorsement of racial equity as a cultural value,

evidence show that Whites currently display implicit biases and negative racial attitudes toward

people of Color. Using research specifically on Blacks as an example, Feagin (1991) and others

found that Blacks experience racism both subtle and overt in multiple settings including the

workplace, educational settings, and public places such as restaurants and on the street (Feagin,

1991). However, in countries such as the U.S. where egalitarian values are professed, personal

biases become sublimated into less detectable and thus possibly more pernicious forms. Pearson,

Dovidio, & Gaertner (2009) use the concept of aversive racism to illustrate how racial disparities

between Whites and Blacks continue to exist when Whites overall state they support equal rights

and equal treatment. One possibility is that explicit prejudice still exists, but because of the

norms against it, Whites are more guarded about the public expression of bias.

This would be consistent with Feagin's (1991) findings that the most common type of

discrimination middle-class Blacks experienced was rejection or poor service in public

accommodations. Discriminatory actions of this type are also referred to as racial

microaggressions, defined by Sue et al. (2007) as "brief and commonplace daily verbal,

behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that

communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or

group" (p.273).

According to Pearson, Dovidio & Gaertner, (2009) Aversive racism, is characteristic of White liberals, as their egalitarian values operate on a conscious level, while their racial bias is more covert. The researchers contend that social categorization by race is largely automatic in the U.S. and that Whites tend to stereotype other Whites as intelligent, successful, and educated, and stereotype Blacks as aggressive, impulsive, and lazy. They state that:

> Aversive racists sympathize with victims of past injustice, support principles of racial equality, and genuinely regard themselves as non-prejudiced, but at the same time possess conflicting often non-conscious, negative feelings and beliefs about Blacks that are rooted in basic psychological processes that promote racial bias (Pearson, Dovidio & Gaertner, 2009, p.316).

As noted by Feagin, (2001) Sue et al. (2007) and others, this contradiction between values and underlying racial prejudice often manifests itself in anxiety, discomfort, or avoidance of people of Color, and because it is not direct, is easily rationalized or justified using a non-racial factor.

Due to the subtle nature of aversive racism it operates in Whites without their conscious awareness, allowing them to maintain a non-prejudiced self-image. So although the racism itself may be subtle, the consequences can be severe. The bias perpetuates and harms people of Color and is likely to persist and remain unchallenged because it is not readily identified (Pearson, Dovidio & Gaertner, 2009).

Colorblindness.

Much of the contemporary writing about racism includes discussion of the phenomenon of Colorblindness, the assertion that one "doesn't see color" or that "we are all human." Colorblind ideology is prominent among White Americans, many of whom consider themselves

to be politically progressive or anti-racist. Different manifestations of colorblindness were prevalent in many studies of White parents, including VanAusdale & Feagin, (2001) Johnson & Shapiro (2003) Park (2010). Because of it's centrality as a contemporary discourse about racism and it's problematic implications for teaching White children how to be effective allies and anti-racist adults, in this section I will review several perspectives on colorblindness and the different ways in which it manifests.

Williams (1997) writes about the perils of a colorblind future. She describes White colorblindness as "the emperor's new clothes," a "purity achieved through ignorance" (p.5). She asserts, as many contemporary Black scholars have, that talking about race doesn't make it non-existent (Dyson, 2007; West, 1993; Williams, 1997).   Julian Bond, Chairman of the NAACP stated "…They (race neutral theorists) are colorblind alright- colorblind to the consequences of being the wrong color in America today" (as cited in Wise, 2010, p.63).

Colorblindness also serves the function of upholding structural racism by denying that individuals and institutions treat people differently based on race, both those individuals and institutions avoid accountability for any discrimination that takes place. People who call attention to race related issues are pressured to remain silent by being called "racist," "oversensitive," or told they are "playing the race card."   Bonilla-Silva (2006) explains how Whiteness continues to function in a society that claims to be "beyond race." He describes color-blind racism as a modern version of the Jim Crow era of the 1960s and 1970s, and "the main force behind contemporary inequality…it is as effective as slavery and Jim Crow in maintaining the racial status quo" (p.272). Proponents of colorblindness might acknowledge disparities between the wellbeing of Whites and people of Color in the United States, but differ with traditional anti-racist thought about reasons for these disparities. This is one of the most

problematic and inherently racist consequences of colorblindness; if institutional racism does not account for disparity, personal or cultural shortcomings become the de facto cause.

Colorblindness precludes the derailing of many government policies such as affirmative action that benefit people of Color. If we believe live in a society where race is now irrelevant, and discrimination is no longer a significant barrier there is no need for policies intended to protect people of Color against discrimination. That Whites always had access to education and jobs based on their race is ignored, and deliberately creating access points for people of Color through affirmative action is called racist. The perspective that people of Color are given unfair or unearned advantage is ironic since White privilege -by definition unearned advantage- has benefited Whites since the United States was founded and continues to function today (Doane, 2003; McIntosh 1989; Wise, 2010). Many prominent thinkers on the subject of race including Bonilla-Silva (2010) Dyson (2007) West (1993) Frankenberg (1993) and McIntosh (1989) have called for the recognition of race as an important social construct that is highly impactful on each of their lives; whether they are a person of Color or White. Their race often affects how they are received and treated by others. As an example, Dyson states that as a Black man he often has trouble hailing a cab in New York City, while Peggy McIntosh, a White woman states that she has stopped to hail cabs for an African American man on the street when a cab would not stop for him (Dyson, 2007, pp.120-121). Clearly race operates for both parties, and for the benefits of those perceived as White. To assert colorblindness is to dismiss the experiences of people of Color have with discrimination both overt and covert in the form of micro-aggressions. According to Paul Kivel (2002) a White anti-racist activist, it is not useful or honest for White people to make the assertion that they are colorblind. He states that the only way to work for justice is to recognize the profound negative effect racism has had on the lives of people of

Color. Instead of being "color neutral," he suggests we notice exactly the difference color makes in the way people are treated.

Individualism as part of colorblindness.

DiAngelo, (2004) illustrates how whites use the discourse of individualism and colorblindness to reproduce the American myth of meritocracy. In her reflections as a White person facilitating anti-racism discussions in graduate level courses and the work place she became familiar with the recurrent insistence of White people that everyone should be perceived as an individual and unique, and thus not categorized as a racial group. DiAngelo posits that using the line of reasoning that we are all individuals denies the importance of social categories such as race, class and gender, reducing them to meaningless labels. Following this logic, those in power rose to their positions because of their personal merits and strengths, and those at the bottom are there because of their personal shortcomings (DiAngelo, 2010).

In this way, individualism and the assertion of Colorblindness by Whites upholds the status quo. DiAngelo (2010) cites the Wessel study in 2005 in which 5,000 fictitious resumes were sent to answer help wanted adds. Typically White sounding names were assigned to half of the resumes, and typically African American sounding names were assigned to the other half. The applicants with white-sounding names received 50% more callbacks regardless of the type of job or the size of the employer (pp.12-13). Data such of this reflects the reality of the barriers faced by African Americans that are too often are minimized or denied by Whites, many of whom contend that people of Color are the ones who in fact have unfair advantage.

Universalism as part of colorblindness.

Bell hooks also describes the ways in which her White students erupt angrily when told by Black students that they are being watched and analyzed by Blacks with an "ethnographic

gaze." She elaborates, "They have a deep emotional investment in the myth of "sameness," even as their actions reflect the primacy of Whiteness as a sign of who they are and how they think" (hooks, 2008, p.21). She posits that the rage expressed by these White students stems from their belief that any examination of a group based on difference threatens the liberal belief in a universal subjectivity, and the ideology that "we are all just people" and if we could all just accept this that racism would no longer exist (hooks, 2008, p.21).

Wise, (2010) describes the problem with the post-racial liberalism of the Obama era. He states the philosophy of colorblind universalism is that the inequality between Whites and people of Color, especially Blacks, in the United States is no longer caused by racism, but attributed to other forces such as economics, or engrained cultural factors. Wise also states that colorblind universalists would be likely to acknowledge past oppressions but tend to minimize how much they impact the current status of Blacks and other people of Color today. He sites examples of recent polling in which most Whites believe Blacks are just as well of as they are in terms of jobs and income, despite that it is documented that African Americans are twice as likely as whites to hold low-wage jobs and twice as likely to be unemployed in good economic times or bad (Brown et al. as cited in Wise, 2010, p.66).

White parenting and colorblindness.

Colorblindness, as a discourse that is ubiquitous in mainstream culture, is also highly evident among White parents. Tatum discusses how colorblindness is often evoked when she addresses White parent groups. She states that White parents often contend with pride that their children are colorblind, and offer as evidence a story of friendship with a child of Color whose race has never been mentioned to them. Tatum wonders if rather than a sign of colorblindness many White children have learned it was impolite to mention somebody's race (Tatum, 1997,

p.36). Tatum goes on to state she has seen the legacy of silencing children around race in the college level classes she teaches, and that her White students often refer to someone as Black in hushed tones that infer there is something wrong with such an identification. She addresses this by pointing it out, and reminding them it is only problematic to mention race when it is irrelevant to the conversation. In cases such as referring to the only Black person in a crowd, we should not be afraid to identify that person as Black (Tatum, 1997, p.37).

Johnson & Shapiro (2003) explicate at colorblindness and new racism in a research study in which they interviewed White parents about where they live and send their children to school. Their interviews provided clear evidence that race was in the minds of these parents when they made decisions regarding their children. Some of the content was overtly racist while some was coded by terms such as "good" (White) schools or neighborhoods vs. bad ones. Because they have material advantage, many White families can choose to segregate themselves into their own neighborhoods and schools, perpetuating segregation and racial inequality. Johnson & Shapiro remind us that separate is not equal in a racist society.

In addition to colorblindness, "celebrating differences" is another form of what scholars term "new racism." Many parents who choose racial segregation also claim to respect and celebrate differences in their schools. Yet this approach is the other side of the colorblind coin. Recognizing and celebrating differences is a positive goal, but highly problematic when it occurs in self-selected segregation from those we claim to celebrate. Further, it does not challenge systemic inequalities that disadvantage people of Color.

Racial Identity Development

There are a variety of theories on racial and ethnic identity development, most of which proceed in stages or phases that are different for people of Color and White people. According

to Tatum (1997) there is a "point of entry" in Black identity development that emerges when the individual begins to understand him or herself within the context of a racist society.   This is different for White people who will not be targets of racism; many will never become aware of racism or their White privilege that results from it.

Jackson & Hardiman (1993) use the Social Identity Development Model (SIDM) to describe how in their work to eradicate oppression they re-conceptualized the previous understanding of the problem as bias that should be "removed." Instead they posit that oppression is learned by both the oppressor and the oppressed, and thus must be unlearned by both of these groups (Jackson & Hardiman, 1993). This unlearning process happens in generic stages as the oppressor and oppressed move through attempting to forge a liberated identity in a racist environment. The authors describe the SIDM as a kind of "road map" through phases of consciousness (Jackson & Hardiman, 1993). They name five points on the map naïve acceptance resistance redefinition and internalization. The stages of acceptance and resistance have two ways in which they can manifest passive (unconscious) or active (conscious) (Jackson & Hardiman, 1993).

With the exception of the naïve stage, each stage of consciousness includes three sub-stages the world view the person has when they enter the stage the world view they have when they have become fully immersed in the stage of conscious and the world view they have as they prepare to exit the current stage of conscious and enter a new one (Jackson & Hardiman, 1993). The authors describe the identity development of the oppressor, in which the person actively or passively accepts their position of privilege; in the case of Whites they may avoid contact with people of Color or believe that people of Color have unfair advantages. If they move into the second stage, resistance, they start questioning and challenging social systems and own behavior

that support oppression. Whites may do this by challenging racist language, believing racism is

pervasive in society, and becoming active against it (Jackson and Hardiman, 1993).

Once understanding and acceptance of the dynamics of social privilege occur, the person

may then move into redefinition. This stage includes the process of gaining new understandings

by discussing and observing other members, grappling with self-definition, and "renaming" the

self and the oppressive group (Jackson & Hardiman, 1993). This includes working with other

Whites to examine their privilege, examining White culture, and seeing Whites as responsible for

eliminating racism. The final stage, internalization, is achieved when the person becomes

comfortable with their new identity and continues to nurture it despite the hostile environment of

an oppressive society. A White person in the internalization stage is able to act authentically

with all members of racial groups regardless of what stage of racial identity development they

are in (Jackson & Hardiman, 1993).

Using Jackson and Hardiman's SIDM can help place how far along the individuals and

institutions are on the racism to anti-racism continuum, and presumably, parents who identify as

anti-racist will be further along. This framework gives a point of reference and may be helpful

for whites to see their internal experiences contextualized as part of a normal progression.

However, a criticism that can be made of Jackson and Hardiman's SIDM is that it is too linear,

and much like challenges to Piagetian theories of psychological development, it does not

acknowledge complexities of human identity. It is normal to move from phase to phase or

primarily dwell in one phase and regress in some situations.

Helms (1990) described White identity development as six distinct stages: contact,

disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion and autonomy. During

the contact stage little attention is paid to racial identity and White people often perceive

themselves as being without prejudice.   Often in this stage there is no recognition of institutional racism or white privilege. Disintegration usually occurs as the result of a racial encounter or social situation in which the social meaning of race becomes visible. This is often paired with feelings of shame or embarrassment about the previous lack of knowledge and awareness. This cognitive dissonance can be disturbing and painful.

During reintegration the individual retreats back into colorblindness and asserting a lack of personal prejudice. This is usually where White people claim experiences of oppression based on other targeted aspects of identity. The pseudo-independence stage entails a willingness to explore race and racism further, but this often comes from a position of White guilt and caution. Here the person may depend on people of Color to teach them or validate their anti-racism efforts, and aggressively challenges other Whites about racism in order to distance themselves from their own privilege. Entering the immersion/emersion stage a White person is more committed to learning about Whiteness and White culture. They hold themselves more accountable for noticing and learning about the consequences of racism, and find the company of other white allies with which to continue the education process.

Part of the immersion/emersion stage is locating pride as well as responsibility in White identity and continuing actions against racism. Helms' final stage of White identity development is autonomy, in which the person integrates consciousness and competency in relationships and anti-racism work. The White person in this stage has a balance of relationships with Whites and people of Color with whom they have authentic conversations about race and engage in on-going learning (Helms, 1990).

Miller and Garran (2008) state that we all view ourselves in relation to those around us, and that different aspects of identity are enduring while others are more salient or "activated" in

different situations. Like Tatum they discuss developmental psychology and the critical transition between childhood and adulthood that in the West is termed adolescence. Erikson (as cited in Miller and Garran, 2008, p.105) "believed that those with privilege project their unconscious, negative identities onto those who are oppressed, which has the effect of buttressing their sense of superiority and the expense of those who are 'the other' and, further, socially constructed as 'less than.' "Thus, in a society riddled with racism, people have difficulty achieving a positive sense of self without denigrating others or being recipients of un-owned and unacceptable projections from others" (Myers et al., 1991;Volkan, 1988 as cited in Miller and Garran, p. 105). The preceding psychological and developmental insights into racial identity indicate that early intervention is needed to change the white trajectory into obliviousness and racism to one of active awareness and resistance.

Child Development and Racial Attitudes

Several relevant studies on child development in regards to race and racism to show how White children in particular make meaning of racial identity (both their own and others') and how their White identity and the racial attitudes of their parents may shape their racial behavior. The research indicates that children of various racial identities are very aware of race even when it is never explicitly named, and that they internalize both implicit and explicit messages about race from their environment. While there is some disagreement in the literature about the degree of complexity in children's racial understandings, it is well established that children do notice racial distinctions, and realize it is taboo (at least among Whites) to talk about them. There are a small number of compelling studies that indicate children's racial knowledge is much more sophisticated than commonly thought.

Quintana (2008) notes the remarkable ability of children to develop notions of race and racial difference. His model of Racial Perspective Taking Ability (RPTA) applies children's social cognition to the racial aspects of the social and personal worlds. The RPTA theory applies principles of Selman's 1980 model of Social Perspective-Taking Ability (SPTA), which was applied to four interpersonal domains: peer group, individual, family, and friendship contexts (as cited in Quintana, 2008). Quintana's model adds the fifth dimension of race to this understanding of child development. According to this model, children start with an understanding of race based on physical characteristics, usually essentializing race as purely outwardly visible distinctions used to classify people. They then move to the literal perspective in which they can now understand the concept of heritage and tend to focus on literal aspects of race such as types of food or countries of origin (Quintana, 2008).

The next level is the social perspective in which they then begin to observe patterns such as social class, which, although not literally tied to race, is an area in which racial disparities are apparent. At this level they also note discrimination as associated with race (Quintana, 2008). The third level is the racial group consciousness perspective. Here young people integrate observations of specific events and experiences into recognizable patterns and can infer the perspective of a racial group. The authors note that for many children at this level there is a merging of personal and racial identity.

Quintana (2008) also states that White children as members of the dominant group in the racial hierarchy tend to develop less of their RPTA abilities. They speculate "being a racial minority provides ample stimulation for thinking about race and promotes explicit cultural socialization with families, while (White) children… are not provided sufficient stimulation to apply their social cognitive abilities to understand their racial world" (p.19). Because White

children are not socialized with sophisticated racial understanding, they often lack the ability to understand racism and institutional forms of discrimination in society. This is consistent with Helms (1990) and Jackson and Hardiman's (1993) theories of White identity development and Tatum (1997) and McIntosh's (1989) assertion that Whites typically become consciously aware of the importance of race and racism much later in life than people of Color, if at all. We can see based on the research that children notice and create their own understandings of race, and yet early White socialization teaches them to be color-blind and not to analyze or talk about it.

A small but growing number of studies are challenging Piagetian notions of child psychological development as set stages. Authors such as Park (2010) Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001) Vygotsky (1962) and Wertch (1990) take a social-cultural approach to how children make sense of race and ethnicity by observing children in context rather than testing them for racial attitudes using adult-oriented schemas. Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001) in their yearlong observation of preschoolers determined that the children are constantly "doing race" and are actors in their own developmental process rather than imitators. They state "Children, like all human beings, actively reshape, blend, and synthesize elements of preexisting patterns found around them, in families, other social settings, and the mass media" (p. 20). The authors witnessed children as young as three demonstrating complex understandings of race. They also made notes about how the adults in the classroom often mistakenly perceived the children as colorblind or misinterpreted their behavior.

Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001) state that most research done on how children learn racial and ethnic matters is based on Piaget's theory that children's minds are naïve and ego centric, and that they have limited ability to understand complex social interaction. Thus many researchers enter into their studies assuming that children are ignorant of racist behavior unless overtly

taught by adults and frame their questions in a way that adults deem developmentally appropriate for children. Because many adult researchers enter into studies with this mindset, they may be missing the multi-layered meanings in children's behavior.

They cite the example of a three-year-old African American girl named Taleshia's behavior during a classroom activity. The activity called for all the pre-school children to choose paint colors that best matched their skin tone, paint their palms, and press handprints onto a large community poster. Taleshia chose a bright pink color, much to the disapproval of one of her White classmates, who was adamant that Taleshia was "wrong" in her choice. This is of note because the White classmate did not police the white children's color choice in the same way, implying that she felt Whiteness was something she should protect. Van Ausdale noted that on several other occasions Taleshia positively and strongly affirmed her Black identity, including delightedly singing, "I'm Black, Black, Black!" (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001, p.72).

Taleshia's choice of pink to represent her color might be interpreted by traditional cognitive-developmental theorists as internalized oppression. However, having witnessed Taleshia and other Black children in various contexts and interactions, the researchers noted there was nuance to their color selections in these exercises. Color choice might affirm skin color, represent the colors of family members, favorite colors, or play with contrast in their own skin color or those around them (Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). These observations seem to indicate that adults should respect the multitude of possible meanings for children's racial behavior while being aware of how racism can affect children differently both within and across race.

In her study of three to five-year-olds in an early childhood classroom, Park participated in discussions with children via a dog puppet named Lulu. During conversation, Emma, a White

five-year-old, Emma stated "…if you eat a lot of vegetables and stuff and some kind of turns like tan, and if it turns tan, it, sometimes from the sun." When Lulu asks her to elaborate she states: "Different kind of people, they have like, darker skin…because they're different kind of people, they come from different countries" (Park, 2010, pp.23-24). Park points out that a traditional Piagetian view would regard Emma's shift in her explanation of skin color difference from food to country of origin as a lack of cognitive ability to understand race. However, having observed the class, Park knew the children had recently participated in a unit about the importance of food in maintaining healthy skin, hair and teeth. According to Park and the sociocultural perspective, Emma's theories might also be understood as her "exercising her own creative agency in her appropriation of resources to construct a theory of race" (p.24).

Park's (2010) findings include a demonstration that children made claims to identities which revealed the primacy of physical racial markers, that their ideas were stretched by social interactions with peers, and that children appropriated discourses about diversity in their own ways (p. 15). These results suggest that not enough credence is given to the complexities of children's social worlds. Like Van Ausdale and Feagin, (2010) Park challenges the view that children are colorblind and that when they use racial language they are parroting adults. According to the author, the children are "active agents struggling to gain fluency in the diversity practices of the larger society. This may be motivated by the perceive significance-indeed, even primacy-of their racial and ethnic identities" (p.29).

The minimization of children's cognitive understanding of race and racism could have some unintended consequences. It seems it might set White children up to become "colorblind" by dismissing their words and actions as parroting thus further socializing them into a White culture of silence and dismissal of racism.   For children of Color such as Taleshia in Ausdale

and Feagin's (2001) study, assumptions, particularly those made by White adults, may relegate them to a passive-victim status. We can't know what drives children's behavior in any given time, but perhaps approaching them with respect for their agency and capability would set us up to have more honest and effective conversations with them about race.

The Developmental Intergroup Theory (DIT) proposed by Bigler and Liben (2007) assigns an important role to adult figures and states that they might powerfully affect their children's perceptions. DIT draws on research creating and manipulating novel social groups (such as giving children either red or blue tee shirts to wear) to avoid societal group memberships to which meanings are already attached. They pretested the children for their cognitive developmental level and self-esteem, (factors hypothesized to affect intergroup attitudes) and then their treatment in the classroom based on their tee shirt color was manipulated (Bigler & Liben, 2007). Developmental intergroup theory holds that psychological significance of grouping criteria increases when adults label groups or group members (Bigler & Liben, 2007, p.164). The authors state this holds whether the labeling is stereotypic (boys go play outside, girls play dolls) neutral (sitting alternately by gender) or manipulating the environment such as dividing the classroom in half. They also state that implicit mechanisms such as segregation increase the salience of social categories. They distinguish Developmental intergroup theory in this way:

> We propose an inferential constructive process in which children observe the characteristics along which humans are sorted. They notice perceptual similarities among those who live, work, and socialize together and then infer that the social divisions they observe must have been caused by meaningful, inherent differences between groups. (Bigler & Liben, 2007, p.164)

They suggest that rather than imitating, children see a characteristic labeled and then draw conclusions about it's importance. Once the adult has made the characteristic such as race or gender salient, even in a neutral descriptive statement, the child will begin to construct hypotheses about it. When the children's formed beliefs or stereotypes about a group impact their behavior they are manifesting prejudice. Here Bigler & Liben (2007) state that children show prejudice and favor their in-group within many intergroup settings, thus their prejudice could be self-generated or informed by adults, children, or implicit messaging in their environment.

Bigler and Liben's DIT is in agreement with Park (2010) and Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001) that children make their own meaning, however this is where the traditional cognitive developmental theorists and sociocultural theorists diverge. Bigler and Liben (2007) state that one of the primary influences on the development of stereotypes in children is the labeling, and state that prohibiting the use of labels such as race or gender will diminish the psychological salience of those categories. They believe the labeling is the first step towards the stereotype and prejudice, however it is not in the label itself but what social meanings and value are assigned to a given group or category that makes it salient for people.

While the labeling and language is not neutral and often enforces White male supremacy, naming gender and race do not create negative attitudes in and of themselves. If differences are not named, role assignments and stereotyping may continue to operate and remain unchallenged- and lead to colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, Tatum, 1997). Bigler and Liben do not account for the fact that the meanings children assign to gender and racial identities are often reflective of what they have witnessed and participated in during their lives. The meaning children assign to

a category may be incorrect, but it is likely generated from some aspect of what they see and experience (Park, 2010, Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001).

DIT doesn't account for internalized dominance and oppression, which may impact how children see themselves or their group (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006). A child might prefer members of another group that has been labeled different from them for any number of reasons, and it seems an oversimplification to state that children show preferential bias towards their in-group. For example, if a child is African American and comes from a wealthy family, they might identify more with white students who are upper class, they might identify with other students of Color, or students of the same gender at different times.

Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) observed that children used different criteria to include and exclude each other depending on their goals in the moment. It is likely for children that at some point early on they will have internalized which aspects of their identity or categories of people in society are more valued or associated with power (Derman-Sparks, 1989). Based on that knowledge, they may identify more with their in or out group as a response, however, a child would be unlikely to respond in the same way to an arbitrary category such as a T-shirt, which they have not been conditioned to as other aspects of their identity such as race and gender.

Tatum (1997) states that Black youth in particular think of themselves in terms of their race because that is how society perceives them. She states while her ten-year-old son David might describe himself based on his talents or like and dislikes that she anticipates that as he ages his race will become more salient for him because of the response of others. "Imagine David passing adults he doesn't know on the sidewalk. Do the women hold their purses a little tighter, or even cross the street? Does her hear the sound of automatic locks on cars as he passes by?" (Tatum, 1997, p.54). Park (2010) observed that children of Color made up only 25% of the class

but accounted for 50% of number of children she noted were at some point excluded by another child. She most often noted older White girls in the class excluding younger children of Color. Bigler and Liben's finding that children automatically prefer their in-group, may be more indicative of the underlying psychological tendency to categorize that precedes bias rather than offering a solution in terms of how to address prejudice in children.

Influence of Parental Racial Attitudes on Children

Monteiro, de Franca & Rodrigues (2009) examined White children's expressions of racial prejudice under different conditions. They hypothesized (using the socio-normative approach) that those children older than seven would express less prejudice if an anti-racism norm was present. The anti-racist norm was created by the presence of a White researcher, whom they hypothesized would create just by virtue of their presence in the room, the expectation that racial bias or discrimination should not be shown. They tested 283 White children aged 6 to 7 and 9 to 10 years old who performed a task of money allocation to White and Black target children. They were tested in the presence of a White researcher and without to create more or less salience of the anti-racist norm.

They found that the 6 to 7 year old children discriminated against the Black target in both conditions, and the 9 to 10 year old children discriminated against the Black children only when the anti-racist norm was not salient (Monteiro, de Franca & Rodrigues, 2009). This is significant because it shows the older children clearly had racial prejudice but repressed blatant expressions of it under certain social conditions. This makes the important distinction that bias does not decline with the age of the children, but rather that their ability to self-regulate to social cues increases. Consideration of these findings is needed to develop anti-racism curriculum and parenting strategies for White children. Because of the social desirability factor and the anti-

racist norm we cannot count on less expression of explicit prejudice as a marker of success. We must consider implicit prejudice Whites have internalized while living in a racist society and not be satisfied solely with an absence of explicit racism from children or their parents.

Castelli, Zogmaister &Tomelleri, (2009) based their previous research on the transmission of racial attitudes within the family on explicit self-reported measures with both children and parents. Drawing from the DIT proposed by Bigler and Liben (2007) which posits that adult figures play a prominent role in shaping the attitudes of young children, Castelli, Zogmaister & Tomelleri further investigated how expressions of prejudice by parents influenced their children. In their current work they addressed the problems of social desirability influence by testing the implicit attitude and explicit expressions of the parents. The implicit attitudes were measured by testing non-verbal behavior such as body-posture or eye contact. The hypothesis was that children would perceive and develop racial attitudes consistent with the latent meaning of these observed non-verbal behaviors.

The results of the study on three to six-year-old children confirmed that children's attitudes were positively correlated with the mother's implicit attitudes, but not the father's. The inconclusive evidence about children's attitudes in relation to their father's may be due to the fact that for most children the primary care giving is done by the mother so the children take more cues from mothers than from fathers. No data about same-sex parent families were included in this study, but it is likely that the child's racial attitudes correlate with those of the parent with whom they spend more time or have their primary attachment relationship with regardless of gender or family configuration.

Sinclair et al. (as cited in Castelli, Zogmaister & Tomelleri, 2009) found that a positive relation between the racial attitudes of a child and a parent were only found when the child

identified strongly with that parent. This leads us to conclude the transmission of attitudes to children might be heightened when the source of the influence is perceived as important, and that this role could also be taken up with other socialization figures such as siblings, teachers, social workers or other family and community members. Based on the observational studies of Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) and Park (2010) peers are important socialization figures for children that are often overlooked, and that children's interactions with each other have a significant impact on how they come to understand and work with concepts in a racialized society.

Edmonds and Killen (2009) used a developmental intergroup framework to study how adolescents' perception of parental racial attitudes related to their inter-racial relationships. They used the Social Cognitive Domain theory, which holds that individuals use different conceptual perspectives (moral, socio-conventional, or personal) to make social decisions. They used this framework to study the dating and friendship choices of high school students (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). The research using Social Cognitive Domain theory to look at adolescent-parent relationships has shown that teens are better adjusted and socially competent when the parents have open conversations with them about friendship and dating, and when they are given the freedom to make choices about their friendships (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994;Smetana, 1989; Smetana & Turiel, 2003 as cited in Edmonds & Killen, 2009). The authors hypothesized those participants who reported positive racial attitudes in their parents would be more apt to date or have friendships inter-racially. They also expected that as these relationships became more intimate, the parents would exert more control over their adolescents' behavior (Smetana, 2006 as cited in Edmonds & Killen, 2009).

The research was done by surveying 347 high school students about their dating and friendship circles, as well as their perception of their parents' attitudes towards inter-racial

relationships. The study found that the teens who said that their parents had negative racial attitudes were less likely than those who's parents had positive racial attitudes to say that they would date or bring home someone of another race. Participants who said they did not bring cross-race friends home stated most often this was because of a lack of closeness of the relationship. Those who did not bring dates home most often stated this was due to parental discomfort (Edmonds & Killen, 2009, p.12).

Edmonds and Killen also found that the parent's messages were indeed different depending on the type of relationship. The participants said that their parents were more likely to support cross-racial friendships than cross-racial dating (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). Participants also said their parents were more likely to say dating outside their racial group was a "betrayal to their race" and encouraged them to date within their own race (Edmonds & Killen, 2009, p. 13). Overall the adolescent participants reported that their parents used different messages about cross-race relationships for dating and friendship, and that parents used more direct negative expressions about inter-racial dating (Edmonds & Killen, 2009).

Another finding was that the adolescent respondents who reported low dating contact outside of their race were more likely to report they agreed with their parent's opinions than the adolescents who reported high inter-group contact (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). Additionally, although the majority of participants stated they would use personal choice and disregard their parent's opinions, higher inter-group contact was associated with greater agreement with parents (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). Thus it appears parental influence is operating even when adolescents don't believe this to be the case. They also found that high intergroup contact was associated with intimacy in inter-racial friendships and dating, and that these associations were not found in relation to perception's of parents' racial attitudes (Edmonds & Killen, 2009).

According to the authors, this demonstrates that intergroup contact, rather than perceptions of racial attitudes were likely to have facilitated the growth of these relationships.

Parental attitudes are important as youth who limited the intimacy of their cross-race relationships cited parental discomfort most often as the reason they did not bring cross-race dates home (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). The study also revealed that parents expressed concerns differently in regards to cross-race friendship versus dating. Concerns about dating were voiced in terms of safety concerns without explicitly mentioning race. In terms of dating, the parents tended to be more direct in their messaging, and were more likely to state specifically that cross-race dating was wrong. Thus although the adolescents' personal relationships often formed with or without the parents' approval, the parents' attitudes inhibited the development of intimacy within some of these relationships (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). The children who reported low intergroup contact seemed to be the most vulnerable to parents' prejudices or disapproval, which provides an insight into how racism perpetuates, particularly in homogeneous racial or ethnic environments.

White parents and racial silence.

Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006) stress that silence as an important aspect of White racial socialization to challenge. In the autobiographical and oral stories told by White adults to White children many White adults do not discuss racism at all, or if they do it is only presented as an act of individual bigotry, not as systemic advantage for Whites. Whites are often held back from racial questioning or commentary by other Whites and encouraged to be silent about race. Tatum (1997) describes this, stating that instead of silencing children we should openly address their comments and questions, such as her son's question at his preschool that a white mother and brown-skinned mixed race child. Tatum's son asked her, "Why don't they match Mommy?"…

"You and I match. They don't match. Mommies and kids are supposed to match." To this Tatum replied, "David they don't have to match. Sometimes parents and kids match, and sometimes they don't" (p.33).

Tatum stated she felt good about her ability as a parent to address these questions and comments as they came up, as she was a professor of the psychology of racism and child development. However she wondered about the ability of the other children's parents and the teachers in her son's predominantly White preschool. When Tatum asked the teacher about how she handled the children's questions about racial differences she stated, "It really hasn't come up." Tatum hypothesized this may in part be due to the fact that children have loaded or taboo conversations away from adult authority figures.

This hypothesis is supported by Van Ausdale and Feagin's (2001) data, which noted on many occasions during their observations of preschoolers that they spoke more openly about race when the teachers where not present. Montiero, de Franca & Rodrigues (2009) whose study found that White children ages 7 to10-years-old discriminated less when a White adult researcher was present further supports VanAusdale & Feagin's (2001) data. This research illustrates how parents or other authority figures shape their children's racial behavior by inhibiting them from discussing race openly. Tatum adds the hypothesis that when parents or teachers do not know how to respond, it is easier to "not hear" the comments, and thus dispense with the need to address them (Tatum, 1997, p.36).

While many Whites may not be overtly cognizant of their own Whiteness, patterns of partiality towards other Whites are prevalent. Derman-Sparks & Ramsey (2006) point out that White children's preference for their own race was not seen as problematic, while Black children's desire to be White was interpreted as a negative effect of racism on the Black

children's self. This is grounded in the widely held perspective by Whites that racism is not their problem, if it is a problem at all (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Derman-Sparks & Ramsey describe Cross's (1991) distinction between personal identity (PI) and reference group orientation (RGO). PI includes children's cognitions and emotions about their own traits, abilities, and self-worth, whereas RGO reflects children's understanding and feelings about their own racial or ethnic group (as cited in Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p.40). Cross contends that PI is shaped by the child's social experiences with family and friends, and the RGO is shaped by the larger societies values toward the child's racial or ethnic group.

Like Tatum, (1997) Cross's view is that children of Color may face a conflict between their positive view of themselves and negative macro-level messages about their group (as cited in Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p.40). Derman-Sparks & Ramsey go on to add that for White children, positive PI and RGO are reflected back to them, and thus the may internalize a sense of racial superiority (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006). In her previous research, Ramsey found that White children perceive Whiteness as "normal" and traits of other racial groups as abnormal. She also found that virtually all the 4 to 5 year-old children she interviewed believed that people were inherently White, and that Black people had been "painted, sunburned, or dirtied" (as cited in Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p.41). While this may be solely children's attempt to explain skin color difference, if these ideas remain unchallenged they support the ideology that "whiteness is normal, natural, and superior" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p.41). Clark (2006) argued that White children "are being given a distorted perception of reality and of themselves, and are being taught to gain personal status in unrealistic ways" (as cited in Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p.42). Derman-Sparks & Ramsey add "…White children are at risk for developing overblown, yet fragile, identities, instead of developing a solid sense of

self based o n their real interests, connections to people, and contributions to the community" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p.42).

Derman-Sparks & Ramsey (2006) describe their view of how children become socialized into racism. They state that children absorb beliefs about White superiority from media, which consistently portrays positive images of wealthy powerful Whites as business people, politicians, or models, and negative or limited images of people of Color as criminals, in poverty, in comedy and music based on stereotypes (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006, p.42). These images become real to children, particularly those who do not have experience with people outside of their own racial group. This point is supported by the data in Edmonds & Killen's (2009) study of adolescents' inter-racial relationships as they found children with limited inter-group experience were more likely to take on their parent's opinions (Edmonds & Killen, 2009). Derman-Sparks & Ramsey (2006) state that children observe power differentials in their communities every day, and that they see who lives in more or less affluent neighborhoods and who holds positions of authority and power. These researchers advocate creating a counter-narrative to combat negative images of people of Color and the false image of White superiority.

Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001), in their observations of preschoolers, take a critical view of common adult interpretations of how young children "do" race. First they challenge major theories of child development stemming from the Piaget tradition, stating that it is outdated and underestimates children's ability to understand, interpret, and act on the racial messages they receive. This frames the discussion in a way that upholds the adult perspective that children are colorblind, and does not acknowledge the ways that they act out their race in their everyday living. Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001) propose an alternative perspective on racial learning. They state:

For children, attention to racial or ethnic distinctions arises from their salience to interactional situations at hand. They are meaningful to children because they are significant in their social worlds. The very real images of racial and ethnic groups are available to the children through direct observation of the world around them, and these images are grounded in the dynamic social structure of society- as seen around them and in the mass media- and in their past and ongoing interactions with other adults and children. Many choices of action accumulate over a period of time, and constantly reinforce race and ethnicity as developing working concepts for children (p. 17).

Anti-racism in Early Education

While little has been written about anti-racist parenting specifically, there is a body of literature on multi-cultural, un-biased, and anti-racist early education programs. Louise Derman-Sparks and the Anti-Bias Curriculum (A.B.C.) Task Force published one of the first widely recognized programs for anti-bias curriculum in 1989. The A.B.C. Task Force builds a case for anti-bias curriculum and lays out steps for early educators. Foundational principals of the task force's work are that children are aware of Color, language, gender and varying levels of ability and can identify privilege and power differentials from a very young age. This reality shapes their developing perspective on self and other. The group also states that all children are harmed by oppression- either by struggling as the targets of race, gender, or ability bias, or by the false belief that they are superior by virtue of being White, male, or able (Derman-Sparks, 1989). They state that internalized superiority is harmful because it dehumanizes and distorts reality for growing children, even if they are the recipients of institutional privilege.

The A.B.C. steps start out by creating an anti-bias environment including diverse images, toys, and materials, then teaching about differences and similarities in race, ability, gender, and culture. The program encourages the children to ask about their own and other's physical characteristics and recognize which things are shared and distinctive between themselves and others. The goal is to enable children to feel self-respect and pride rather than entitlement or inferiority. From there Derman-Sparks (1989) advocates teaching children to resist stereotypes and discriminatory behavior, generate empathy, and participate in group-activism. Ideally activism starts in the classroom and then moves to the community level. Strategies are presented on how to engage and work with parents, who may have different perspectives on how multi-cultural education should be done or if it should be done at all.

Derman-Sparks (1989) speaks to the contention many adults make about the inherent "colorblindness" of children and the assumption that they are unaware of race, prejudice, or stereotypes. Like Bonilla-Silva (2006, 2010) Wise (2010) Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001) Tatum (1997) and others, Derman-Sparks challenges the presumption of Colorblindness; racism is actively functioning in society and among adults and children. They emphasize that children do notice difference and construct classification categories at very young ages, and that racism and other prejudice influence their self-concept and their attitudes toward others.

Tatum strongly advocates early childhood education on racism in her work. She describes her approach to racial conversations, as an African American woman to her Black child. She states that children as young as three notice physical differences, and that questions and confusion about racial differences come early. Her position is supported by others in the field. These researchers Park (2010) Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001) Quintana & McKown (2008) and Derman-Sparks (1989) also acknowledge that children as young as three begin to notice

physical differences, but hold that the children's understanding unfolds in concrete stages, such as first recognizing physical difference, and then learning the values attached to those differences. The socio-cultural perspective taken by Park (2010) and Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001) posits that the children's learning is dynamic and constantly being constructed and grappled with. Tatum's perspective seems to include aspects of traditional Piagetian cognitive developmental framework as stages. However her focus on the inquisitiveness and consideration of potential underlying meanings of children's comments is more of a socio-cultural perspective.

Tatum (1997) notes that the outspokenness of preschoolers often makes their parents uncomfortable. She provides another example of her child David who asked her, after being asked by a White classmate, if he is brown because he drinks "too much chocolate milk" (p.33). To this she replies "No, your skin is brown because you have something in your skin called melanin.   Melanin is very important because it protects your skin from the sun" (p.33). She follows up by affirming her love of his skin color as an attempt to counter the other preschooler's implication that there was something wrong with him. From the socio-cultural viewpoint, both the Black and White child's behavior could be interpreted as active attempts to understand and make meaning of their own and each other's identity. It is of note in this example that the White child seemed to consider his own skin color normative and David's as a deviation, as a result of having "too much" of something.

The outspokenness of three to six-year-old children may also be due to the fact that they are testing out their own theories in their environment. It may also be that they have not developed the self-consciousness older adults and children have about discussing race.   The Montiero, de Franca, & Rodrigues (2009) study showed that White children ages seven to ten-

years-old discriminated less in the presence of the researcher, while the younger children discriminated equally whether or not the anti-racist norm was present.

Bigler (1999) reviewed several versions of multi-cultural curricula for their effectiveness countering racism in children. Bigler cites studies that have shown racism on the part of European Americans (Whites) has changed from more virulent to more subtle forms (e.g. Davis & Smith, 1991; Devine & Elliot, 1999; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; McConahay, 1986; Sears 1988). She argues that that given that racism is learned, it would follow that children's racial attitudes would exhibit these changes. However, it was found that while African Americans have made a shift away from pro-White attitudes, and towards non-biased or pro African American attitudes, European American children continue to promote pro-White and anti-African American attitudes (e.g. Bigler & Liben 1993;Clark, Hocevar, & Dembo, 1980; Doyle & Aboud, 1995; Johnson, 1992, Katz & Kofkin, 1997 as cited in Bigler, 1999).

Bigler (1999) posits there is a dearth of research within psychological literature on the effectiveness of anti-bias interventions for children. She reviews the content and methodology of several studies evaluating these interventions, and makes suggestions for expanding and evaluating curricula and materials. She first describes what Banks (1995) called the "additive" or "contributions" approach in which educators' incorporate multi-cultural heroes, holidays, books, themes, and songs in order to reduce bias based on ignorance. The next level also presents information about different cultures and ethnic groups but specifically presents counterstereotypic information, such as assigning textbooks to a classroom in which the people of Color were described as having characteristics that are typically associated with White Americans (by Whites) such as "works hard."

The transformative approach to multi-cultural teaching goes further than the additive or counter-stereotypic approach, and includes such interventions as McAdoo's 1970 program to give African American children a "Black consciousness" by focusing on the contributions of Black heroes via songs, stories and art projects and books (as cited in Bigler, 1999). Hershey, (1994) also provided a transformative approach, teaching children to multi-cultural curricula and having them participate in games, art, drama, lectures, and discussions about four or more ethnic/cultural groups (as cited in Bigler, 1999).

Finally, Bigler describes the more recent creation of programs that give lessons specifically about stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, which are sometimes called anti-racism programs (e.g. Anderson & Love, 1973; Derman-Sparks & A.B.C. Task Force, 1989; Ponterotto & Peterson, 1993; Short & Carrington, 1996; Sleeter & Grant, 1987; M.S. Spencer, 1998; H. Walker, 1989; Wardle). These programs include activities such as learning to define concepts such as prejudice and looking at power differentials between groups. They usually involve role-playing to increase children's problem solving skills.

The manner in which the different styles of programming are administered varies in duration, scope and frequency, and Bigler states there has been little done to evaluate program effectiveness. The majority of the research focuses on testing the children's racial attitudes before and after the intervention, and there is very little literature on long-term effects. The research that exists is contradictory and unclear as to whether or not the interventions are effective at reducing racial bias in children (Bigler, 1999). She argues that too many of the interventions were bases on simplistic models of child attitude formation, and that because racial bias is prevalent, and resistant to change, that interventions may require a variety of strategies based on different theoretical models. Bigler suggests that optimal interventions might include

counterstereotypic models, training on attending to multiple features of the individuals the children are presented with (such as their race and occupation), the differences within a group (such as between African American doctors and teachers), and between group similarities (such as between African American and European American doctors). Bigler's final recommendation is that effective intervention programs need to be implemented at all levels of schooling, preschool through secondary and be designed specific to match the skills and developmental level of the children they are serving.

The implications of Bigler's (1999) meta-analysis are that further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions being used, and that promotion of effective programming is needed to address the pervasive racial bias the exists especially among White children. This information is also important for the White anti-racism movement, and White parents within it. As anti-racist parents cite school choice and school program as a main source of anti-racism education for their children, they should be aware of which interventions are effective, and advocate for these. It also provides a guideline for the types of interventions parents or other caregivers of children can use with them in their day-to-day life. It is possible that one of the reasons anti-bias programs are not more effective is because the children take in only a minute amount of anti-bias curriculum and a significant amount of negative or biased racial messaging from society at large.

Elaborating on a psycho-social developmental perspective, Hirschfeld (2008) explains how children's conceptions of race develop. One of the most important developmental tasks for a child is the capacity to interpret the behavior of others, and the multiple reasons behind any particular action taken. According to Hirschfeld (2008) the child's capacity to "mentalize" (to interpret and explain behavior of others bases on their mental state) emerges as early as 9-months

old. However, due to the complexity of the social world, they also have a propensity to use visual cues about what kind of person someone is in order to interpret and explain their actions. Hirschfeld goes on to explain that even infants are able to draw distinctions between people that become the basis for social category identity (2008). These distinctions require some interaction with the greater world in which they begin to categorize people based on some visible aspect of identity.

Some social categories are more powerful than others in terms of explaining a persons' behavior. Hirschfeld (2008) gives the example that a woman's occupation is not typically cited as a reason for her behavior, but gender is. He argues that race is the most powerful and unequal social category, because it overrides more social category identities in more situations (Taylor & Fiske, 1978; Kurzban, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2001 as cited in Hirschfeld, 2008). This is because race is so salient politically and economically and is such a strong predictor of success or failure in so many domains. Hirschfeld states that while the historians and sociologists attribute the relevance of race to its economic and political importance; there are significant psychological processes involved as well (2008).

Despite the significant social influence of race, the majority of psychological research on race had focused on racial attitudes, rather than development, and historically it was believed that the way that children learned and understood race was on the basis of surface level similarities. Studies have shown that very young children, ages 2 to 3 years-old, have the capacity to mentalize and attribute other's behavior to their race, and that these attributions tend to match the most prevalent adult stereotypes (Aboud, 1988; Cross, 1991; Katz; 1983 as cited in Hirschfeld, 2008).

In Hirschfeld's 1996 study, he found that children ages 3-5 were able to make multiple adult-like determinations about race, including that race was less likely to change over the course of a lifetime than weight, hair, or clothing color, and that even if a child was adopted by a family of another race, their race would remain that of their birthparents. Hirschfeld also reflects that while the conventional wisdom contends children are colorblind and without racial prejudice, the evidence shows otherwise (Aboud 1988 as cited in Hirschfeld, 2008). He also states that preschool children are colorblind is in part reflective of the fact that like adults they don't usually express overtly prejudice behavior, but they still use race as a mechanism for inclusion and exclusion (Hirschfeld, 2008).

Interestingly, Hirschfeld also cites several studies that have shown that children's biases about race and ethnicity are not consistently associated with the attitudes of the adults and peers in their environment (Bigler, 2004; Aboud & Doyle, 1996; About 2003 as cited in Hirschfeld, 2008). The reasoning behind this is that these sources can be considered "too local" and that the child will learn the norms of the greater community, and that these will be a more powerful influence. For example, children have a tendency to not develop their parent's accent although this is the one they hear the most frequently, because that is not what the broader community sounds like.

To further explain the point, Hirschfeld (1996) shares an example from his study on how children in North America internalize the culturally bound, "one-drop rule" that attests if a person has any traceable Black ancestry, they are considered Black. Black and White 5th graders were shown pictures of inter-racial couples and shown pictures of a Black, White, and biracial child and asked to determine which would be the offspring of the inter-racial couple. The study showed that by early adolescence, White children chose the Black child, in accordance with the

one-drop rule, while the Black children predicted the child would be racially mixed (Hirschfeld, 2008). These original results would indicate the local environment was more influential, however, upon secondary analysis, they found that White children living in a community with a large population of people of Color were like the Black children and tended to assess more accurately that the child would be racially mixed. Thus, predicting how children would respond was more accurately based on the racial beliefs of the broader community than those in their immediate home environments (Hirschfeld, 2008).

In North America race is connected to access and allocation of resources and the psychological systems of racial classification and reasoning are powerful. Hirschfeld (2008) argues that race is potent because it is "so effortlessly learned, and hence easily shared and stabilized over time" (Hirschfeld, 2008, p.47). He contends that the "folk sociology" of race is so easily learned by children because underlying racial thinking is a cognitive susceptibility to societal-wide classifications (Hirschfeld, 2008). Because of that predisposition, racialized thinking is prominent and difficult to dislodge, even if the parent espouses anti-racism values.

If Hirschfeld is correct, how can parents who identify as anti-racist approach the problem of racism with their children? Like Bigler's (1999) assessment of multi-cultural curricula, Hirschfeld's findings would indicate localized attempts to combat prejudice in children are ineffective. Hirschfeld contends that the most important take-away is that American culture profoundly underestimates the power of children's process of acquiring dominant racial thinking, and overestimates the power of local adults to counter it. The idea that children are colorblind is important to debunk in order to address racism. He states that anti-racist interventions are in fact mostly designed to "recapture a (nonexistent) preracial innocence" (Hirschfeld 2008, p.48).

Hirschfeld is critical of the multi-culturalist or additive perspective on trying to address bias in children because it still discusses fairness and unfairness in terms of accepting or rejecting individuals, without addressing structural inequities between groups. He uses the example of the lionization of Rosa Parks as a tired seamstress who did not want to get up, rather than acknowledging her as a long-time participant in the civil rights movement who took carefully designed and organized political action. Thus ironically, the school textbooks reinforces more prejudice than they debunk because they depict Parks as acting alone and impulsively, rather than as part of an active thoughtful movement designed by Blacks (Hirschfeld, 2008). From this viewpoint the "multi-cultural tourist" approach is built on colorblindness and is ineffective at addressing racism. Hirschfeld (2008) advocates that we should use our understanding of child psychology to create realistic goals (rather than colorblind ones) and teach children about institutional racism. His critique of the multi-culturalist approach has serious implications for the school choices of White liberals as a whole, particularly those who align themselves with anti-racist values.

In conclusion, children are sophisticated thinkers and this lends itself well to learning more about racism and other forms of oppression. However, the tendency for White parents and teachers to identify children as racially naïve or colorblind is potentially harmful as it frames the discussion in terms of interpersonal difference rather than an unequal power structure the benefits Whites. The anti-racism literature states that you must understand systems of oppression in order to challenge them and studies on child development show the impact of these systems on children as early as two. The implications for White parents attempting to raise their children with anti-racism values are that they must not underestimate the power of the racial messages that children take in from the culture at large, provide education about racism in both

past and present forms, and engage in anti-racist activism. The sooner children are taught about how racism is perpetuated systematically, the less is may operate on them subconsciously. If ameliorating racism is truly the goal of White liberal parents, then they must confront it directly and role model taking action rather than simply talking about equality.

Chapter III

Methodology

This study is an exploration of the experiences, practices, and values of White people who identify as anti-racist, and how these influence their parenting of White children. Participants were asked what anti-racism means to them, and then to reflect on their own upbringing, perceptions, and experiences regarding race and racism. This was followed-up by questions on how they attempt to incorporate anti-racism values into their parenting, and their view on how aware of race and racism White children are, and whether or not they feel race and racism impact their children.   Questions were also asked about the racial make-up of their neighborhoods and schools when growing up, and what the racial make-up of their children's neighborhoods and schools are now.

This study attempts to shed light on what anti-racism means to White people in the U.S. who claim to identify with it, and how they attempt to incorporate anti-racism into their parenting. Of specific interest was how consistent their answers might be with the scholarship in the anti-racism movement, and in child development and race. Because schools and neighborhoods play such an important role in maintaining or challenging White advantage (Johnson & Shapiro, 2003) I asked these White parents who identified as anti-racist about their choices of neighborhoods and schools.   Also of interest was how parents responded to questions about how their White children were impacted by racism, and how aware of race and racism they

perceived their children to be. As a qualitative study with 20 participants, this research is not intended to represent White anti-racist parents as a whole. However it will offer insight into families within the White anti-racism movement and hopefully encourage future directions for research.

Sample

The data collected consists of the narrative responses of 20 White Americans who were interviewed about their anti-racism values, childhood experiences involving race and racism, parenting practices, housing and school choices, views on their children's perception and understanding. The interviews spanned from 30-105 minutes each, with 1,222 minutes of audio data collected in total on a digital recorder.   The data was analyzed and major themes in the participants' responses to the questions are reported.

The inclusion criteria for this study were that the individual identify their primary racial identity as White, that they indentify as anti-racist, and that they have at least one child over the age of three who's primary racial identity is also White. The also had to be over the age of 18 and English speaking. The sample included eighteen people who identified as female and two who identified as male, with an age range of 30-58. The majority of participants had a middle-class upbringing and currently identified as middle class, and they reported a variety of sexual orientations, religious backgrounds, and current religions.

Data Collection

Participants were recruited through organizations in the Seattle Area where I anticipated White people with anti-racism values would likely be. This included the University of Washington, Seattle Central community college, and three local organizing collectives involved in racial equity or social justice work. I made contacts within these organizations and advertized

the study via poster and email list-serve. An incentive of a thirty-dollar gift card to a local

bookstore was offered to individuals who participated. Recruitment was snowball and ongoing

and as participants were interviewed, I asked them to forward the recruitment email to others

who might qualify for the study. Some participants posted the study on parenting websites they

were a part of. Efforts were made to recruit a sample that represented a range of age, religion,

and sexual orientation and gender identities.

Once a participant responded to my recruitment efforts by email or phone, I contacted

them to verify inclusion criteria. For those who met inclusion criteria, interview sessions were

set up. Nineteen interviews were conducted in a reserved room in a centrally located library in

Seattle. One interview took place at the participants' place of work because she was unable to

commute to Seattle for the interview.   No one who met the criteria and responded before the

deadline was turned away from the study.   Interviews were conducted until data was collected

from all willing and available participants. This served to strengthen the validity of this small

study and include as many perspectives as possible.

Once I met with the interviewee, I obtained informed consent by reviewing the form with

them to ensure they willingly agreed and had all pertinent information about potential risks and

benefits. They then signed my copy and retained a copy for their records. At this time I

provided them a list of local sliding scale mental health providers should any stress or anxiety

arise after the interview was completed. I also explained the potential benefits to the participant

as an opportunity to tell their story and more fully understand how they live out their values and

teach them to their children. It also provided a chance to reflect on what has shaped their

experience and how their children's experience compares to their own. Participation has helped

articulate what White people are doing to work against racism and where our blind spots may be.

After informed consent was obtained, I explained the structure of the interview and that I would begin the interview asking demographic questions and follow-up with the interview questions specifically about how they parent in an anti-racist way and what experiences lead them to their current practices. I gathered my data by audio recording to ensure accuracy. To maintain confidentiality, I kept all audio recordings in a locked file cabinet in my home office. I transcribed the data collected and any identifying information such as names or places was removed. The signed informed consent forms are kept locked in a separate cabinet from the audio recordings. I explained to participants that they would not be anonymous to me as I will have met them in person, but they will not be identifiable to others in any way when the findings are discussed in the thesis. Some data will be presented as a group, and any illustrative vignettes and quoted comments will be disguised to safeguard confidentiality.

I explained that my thesis advisor would have access to the transcribed data after identifying information has been removed. I stored data electronically until it was transcribed as a Word document and disguised. My home computer is password protected and locked in the house when I am not present. I also informed participants that all digital recordings will be kept secure and locked for three years as required by Federal regulations and that after that time they will be destroyed. Participation was voluntary and participants were informed they could refuse to answer any questions.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by grouping responses and identifying major themes. Some categories were established by the interview questions, and others emerged in the data itself. Responses to each question were coded into categories based on what was mentioned or discussed, such as White privilege, institutional racism, colorblindness, school programs and

tracking, slavery, and skin color. Significant patterns and anomalies were reviewed and reported. I compared these parents' responses to contemporary anti-racism literature and previous research studies on child development, race and racism.

Many themes surfaced, including colorblindness, school program choices, gentrification, economic privilege, valuing diversity, activism, a range of awareness of Whiteness, and under-estimating the sophistication of children's understanding of race and privilege. Due to the limits of this paper, I selected the themes that arose most frequently, those that directly addressed the research question, and those discussed in anti-racism literature. These themes received further depth of analysis. Quotations were used to illustrate salient themes.

Chapter IV

Findings

This study explored how White parents who identify as anti-racist raise White children. This chapter describes the findings from interviews conducted from 20 White parents in the United States. The questions in the first section of the interview included demographic questions about age, gender, sexual orientation, economic class, and religion. The second section asks the parents to define what anti-racism means to them, and reflect on their own racial experiences growing up and that of their children now. These questions were designed to shed light on the background of these parents, how they conceptualize race and privilege in their own lives and their children's, and if/how they attempt to incorporate anti-racism values into their parenting.

Demographics

Interviews were conducted with 20 White parents. Eighteen of the participants identified as female and 2 identified as male. None identified as other or transgender. Their age ranged from 30-59 with a mean age of 43 and a median age of 42.5. All the participants currently lived

in the Seattle area of Washington State, however they were raised in a variety of geographic locations across the United States, including California, the Southwest, the Midwest, the North East, and the Pacific North West.

Religion.

The participants reported a variety of religious backgrounds. Eleven of 20 (55%) reported a denomination of Christian faith as their religion growing up, and 4 more, who gave multiple answers, reported a denomination of Christian faith as one of the faith's they were raised with. Thus a total of 15 of 20 (75%) reported a denomination of Christian faith as at least part of their religious background. Four (20%) reported no religious background, and 5 (25%) reported two categories: "Jewish and Protestant," "None and Lutheran," "Protestant as Presbyterian," "Agnostic and Unitarian" and "Episcopal and Jewish." Two of 20 (10%) gave multiple answers, and identified Judaism as part of their religious background. Overall a high number of participants, 15 of 20 (75%) identified with a current religion, but only 3 of these with the religion they were raised with. Also, 10 of those who were raised with a Christian faith, or 50% of the total sample no longer identified with Christianity in adulthood. Only 1 participant identified with no religion either in their upbringing or currently.

Geographic area.

The participants were not asked what geographic area they were from, but all of them spontaneously referred to where they were raised during the interview. Five (25%) reported growing up in the Northeast, 4 (20%) in California, 3 (15%) in the Southeast, 1 (5%) in the Southwest, 3 (15%) in the Midwest, and 2 (10%) in the Northwest. Two (10%) reported moving from one area of the country to another in childhood, from the Northeast to Southeast and

California to the Northwest respectively. Two also mentioned living abroad for a period of time, one in Canada and one in Norway before their children were born.

Economic class.

The participants were asked to identify their class background as low, middle or high income. The vast majority 15 of 20 (75%) identified their background solely as "middle class" or "upper-middle class." Several of the participants differentiated beyond the three categories of low, middle and high. Of the 15 who identified as middle class, 3 stated they were "upper middle class." Of the remaining 5 participants, 2 (10%) identified with multiple class backgrounds, including middle class. One (5%) stated that their class changed during their childhood from low to middle, and the other (5%) stated she was "bi-class" with one side of the family strongly identified as working class and the other side educationally privileged but not "moneyed." Three participants identified their economic class background as "low."

Participants were asked if their current economic class was low, middle or high income. Here middle class became even a stronger majority, with 19 of 20 participants (95%) stating they currently identify themselves in this category. Several differentiated further within the middle class category, with 2 (10%) stating "upper middle" and 2 (10%) stating "lower middle." Only 1 participant (5%) stated she currently identified her economic class as low. None of the participants identified with a high-income bracket, either in childhood or currently.

There are several possible explanations for strong majority of middle class identification both currently and in their backgrounds. White people have a disproportionate amount of wealth in the U.S., so when talking to members of this group specifically there is a higher likelihood they would be in the middle-income bracket. Also, the White anti-racism movement largely takes place in college and university settings. Although it was not one of the demographic

questions, many participants indicated they had a bachelors or masters level education and described college as an important phase of their own racial identity development. Higher education is also correlated with higher income levels, and both of the participants who reported low economic class background and current class as lower middle and upper-middle had Masters level education.

Another possible factor is that some of the participants may have reported their economic class as higher or lower than it actually is. Studies have shown that most Americans tend to identify themselves in this category, because they see examples of people who have more and less income than they do, and thus make a determination they are in the middle (Leondar-Wright, 2005). Actual income may put them near the bottom or very near the top of the bracket, but in many situations it is more socially desirable to be middle class. Those with more money can distance themselves psychologically from their economic privilege, and continue to view themselves as hardworking and deserving of what they have (Leondar-Wright, 2005). Those who are low income bolster their own sense of self by identifying with the status of middle class even though economically they fall below it.

Sexual orientation.

Thirteen of 20 participants (65%) identified as heterosexual or straight. Five (25%) identified as LGBTQ, and within that broad category, 1 (5%) as gay, 1 (5%) as queer, 1 (5%) as bisexual, and 2 (10%) as lesbian. Two participants (10%) gave multiple sexual orientations as an answer, stating they currently identified as straight or heterosexual, but one said she was bisexual in the past and the other that her orientation was fluid and indicated it might change in the future. It is noteworthy that the percentage of participants who identified their sexual orientation as LGBTQ (25%) is much higher that what has been reported in the general population. The most

recent studies have shown that 3.5% of the adult population of the United States identifies as LGBT (Gates, 2011). Possible explanations could be that people who are LGBTQ are more likely to adopt anti-racism values. Three of the respondents who identified as LGBTQ stated that they were more sensitive to racism as an aspect of oppression because they experienced homophobia. Another contributing factor may be that the geographic area in which the interviews took place is known to have progressive values and has a higher concentration of people who identify as LGBTQ.

Children.

Of the 20 participants, 12 (60%) had 2 children, 7 (35%) had 1 child, and 1 (5%) had 3 children, for a total of 34 children. Two participants (10%) reported grandchildren, the first with 1 grandchild, age 1, and the second with 2 ages 5 and 1. The age range of the children was wide- from age 1-34. The participants were required to have at least one child over age 3 to participate, but three reported 1 year-old children or grandchildren during the interview. The average age of the participants' children was 8.9 and the mean age was 7. The gender of the children was 13 female, and 21 male.

Interview Questions

What does anti-racism mean to you?

The first in-depth interview question participants were asked was: "What does anti-racism mean to you?" There were a range of responses from short to long, and from vague to detailed and clear. The most frequently cited theme when asked to define anti-racism was an awareness of White privilege. Eleven of 20 participants (55%) named this, although they applied the concept differently. The second most prevalent theme, mentioned by 9 of 20 participants (45%) was that racism must be countered or resisted both individually and systemically. Eight of

20 (40%) also remarked on the importance of understanding "the system" of institutional

oppression, and 7 (35%) described an awareness of power and oppression as part of what anti-

racism meant to them. Four participants (20%) identified an awareness of discrimination people

of Color experience, and 4 (20%) stated recognizing racism (systemic or individual) as part of

anti-racism.

Certain concepts that are prominent in the anti-racism literature only arose once or twice

within the sample, including being an ally to people of Color, being accountable to people of

Color, countering internalized White superiority, and supremacy, and blatant colorblindness.

Two individuals (10%) spoke about being an ally to people of Color, or acting in solidarity with

them against discrimination. Two (10%) mentioned educating others about anti-racism

principles, and two (10%) suggested trying to see people as individuals and/or not judge based

on race or appearance as part of what anti-racism means to them. Only 1 of the 20 participants

(5%) described anti-racism as solely countering institutional racism without mentioning personal

awareness of Whiteness or internal racism. Only 1 (5%) mentioned learning the perspectives of

people of Color and 1 (5%) mentioned accountability to people of Color as an important aspect

of White anti-racism in particular. One (5%) mentioned the recognition of White supremacy and

superiority in the responses to this question.

When asked what anti-racism means to them 6 participants (30%) laughed, chuckled,

hesitated, or indicated that the question was difficult. This is interesting as they all stated they

indentified with anti-racism values when screened for the study, and may be indicative of the

discomfort and lack of practice White people have talking about race. An additional factor is

likely the social desirability affect and the wish to be seen as good people and thus not perceived

as racist. As Whites are generally socialized into silence around race, it is typical that they struggled for words. This is Jess' response when asked what anti-racism means to her:

> Jess: (Laughs) all right. Um… (Pause) Let's see. It's funny how hard that question is to answer. Um. Anti-racism… um… I guess I would see it as intentional actions to try to counter, undo institutional racism, internalized racism. Do you want more specific or…?
>
> Interviewer: Anything you'd like to add.
>
> Jess: I'll just go with that for now.

While Jess also mentions action against institutional and individual racism, her hesitant response implies that she is anxious or unsure discussing the subject. Perhaps she is afraid she will be judged, or nervous because she does not meet her own definition of anti-racism. This is Wendy's response when asked what anti-racism means to her:

> (Sighs) Um, I should have done more formulation while I was driving.   (Laughs) What does it mean to me? It means being aware of privilege…and how that, being aware of how you are in the world in that context with that frame of reference of how you are as um priv of White privilege and what that means. And um, the power of that, and the influence. I guess just having some conscious awareness of it. Um. Yeah. That's where I'll start! (Laughs) Maybe it'll evolve as we talk.

Wendy identifies awareness of White privilege as important, but she does elaborate. Her understanding of anti-racism seems to begin and end there as she acknowledges she hasn't thought much about the subject. She does not mention active resistance to racism, a foundational principal of anti-racism in the literature.

Lila also mentioned awareness of White privilege when asked what anti-racism means to her:

That you're um trying to actively keep bias out of your communications, out of your life, out of your emotions, your brain, and work with others, as well as kind of daylight the times when a lot of racism is just kind of underlying, and such as the whole concept of White privilege we don't always think about it, it's just there and it's interesting to have a conversation with someone who just isn't aware, isn't thinking about it at all and shed that light on there a little more…. when you see it you need to point it out, and especially if it's a friend, that doesn't realize there are greater implications of what they are saying or to this assumption that they made.

For Lila, anti-racism is about awareness of her White privilege, and a sense of responsibility to identify unconscious White racism when she witnesses it and promote awareness among other Whites, particularly if they are friends. However her approach, only slightly more proactive than Wendy's, begins and ends at un-doing individual bias and does not identify institutional racism. She conveys only a partial commitment when she states anti-racism is to "kind of daylight the times when a whole lot of racism is underlying."

In contrast, Ruth a participant involved in early education, discusses racial privilege in terms of inter-locking systems of oppression:

To me, anti-racism is a piece…you cannot disentangle it from awareness of power and privilege in every sphere: gender, class, sexual orientation, income… (identifying with your target status) …doesn't own your own participation in power and privilege. So that's my understanding of how to teach kids to be anti-racist, is how do you teach them

to see the system *always*? And to understand you can be complicit in the system without being intentional…acknowledge your complicity and hold the dichotomy of being both good and complicit at the same time.

Ruth immediately identifies that understanding of institutional oppression as the most important thing to teach children. Once children are aware of the institutional dimensions, they can begin to understand how they unintentionally participate in perpetuating oppression. She also strategizes about how to teach about complicity and combat oppression while supporting positive identity development.

Another participant, Shayla, was the only parent to mention awareness of White supremacy and internalized superiority in her definition of anti-racism. Shayla cited examples of institutional racism such as laws and policies, and how she as a White person takes advantage of them while also trying to change them. She states:

Being an anti-racist is doing the best I can to to live in regular cognizance of that…to understand the historical context we're operating in, and understand power structures, and, you know, how we can try to change them in our world, in our locus of control, in our school, in our working life, um… and struggling with that.

Shayla also immediately identified institutional and historical racism, how it benefits her, and the contradictions in enjoying racial advantage while working to dismantle it.

Maria was a participant who described integrating anti-racism into many aspects of her personal life and work and gave a clear answer:

The institution of racism has resulted in disproportionate outcomes for people of Color, and conversely for White people, it means you know, that we get the good stuff, and so for me, what is means is that I am really I am focused on equity…the whole civil rights movement, and what's happened since then, that it's been geared towards *helping* people of Color, … like, "Oh if we set up whatever program to help people of Color" without identifying the fact that everything in this country is geared toward the benefit of White people, and until we change the underlying structures, to make that happen, we're never gonna get racial equity. So that's what it means to me.

Maria's response demonstrates that she understands the systemic nature of racism and that programs for people of Color will not create racial equity, and that the foundational structures of society must be changed in order to achieve it. She does not mention individual awareness or interpersonal issues as part of her definition of anti-racism, as so many others did. She may view that as important as well, but chooses to direct her anti-racism work towards macro level change.

When asked what anti-racism means to them, several participants gave answers consistent with forms of Colorblindness rather than anti-racism. One, participant, Willa, responded this way:

Well, I think it's…someone who is actively opposed to racism, not just um, someone who is intentional about being against racism. Should I define racism? Preferring one race over another. So for me that would mean to um…to seek, to treat people equally, of equal worth I guess.

Similarly, Teresa responded as follows:

Um...not just…It's a belief in equity and equality of humans, and it almost is as well a proactive behavior about how you promote equity and equality amongst the races. Believing that everyone is, should be equal and treated equally.

Both Willa and Teresa advocate "treating everyone equally" regardless of race, but do not acknowledge power differentials. They both mention action against racism and for equality, but their answers are vague and non-specific. Willa describes racism as "preferring one race over another" and seems to view racism as individual and interpersonal rather than as systemic. Teresa waivers about whether all people *are* or *should be* equal. She also vaguely hits on activism within anti-racism, stating it is "almost as well a proactive behavior" whereas the anti-racism literature states that it is by definition proactive.

Miranda's also mentions equality:

It means to me that we are all equal, and that, you know that we don't have any preconceived notions about someone based on what they look like. I mean, I have to admit that I fall, I probably fall into the trap of stereotypes based on how people behave, or you know I mean there is a certain ideas that you have based on what music they are listening to or what they are dressed like. But I don't consider it based on skin color you know.

Miranda's understanding of anti-racism is that it is a belief in equality and not holding "preconceived notions." Curiously, in the same response she discloses that she judges people based on how they look and what music they listen to but doesn't consider the beliefs she has about types of people to be correlated with race. Her own racism is veiled as stereotypes which

she admits she holds, while simultaneously denying that she uses race or skin color as a basis for her assumptions. She goes on to state:

> I don't think that what you look like or how you what you sound like, you know, I mean how you speak, or if you have a disability, or just an accent, or you know, maybe just your grammar, that doesn't mean anything. It's again, we're all different.

Within the answer to the same question, Miranda contradicts her original statement by saying differences (interestingly not naming race or skin color here) "don't mean anything" and reverting back to a colorblind stance, "we're all different" as if difference is neutral when she previously disclosed she assigns values and makes judgments about differences such as clothing or music choice.

Miranda was an outlier in that she was the only participant who seemed completely unfamiliar with any anti-racism thought or literature. The rest of the participants touched on important themes such as undoing institutional and interpersonal racism, awareness of privilege and discrimination, and resistance to racism in it's various forms. However the vague answers given by the majority of the White people interviewed here indicate that the self-identification as anti-racist equates more to their value*s* than their knowledge or behavior. Many gave responses that aligned with anti-racism principles in some aspects and contradicted them in others such as colorblindness.

How does being an anti-racist White person influence your parenting?

All participants stated that their anti-racism values influenced their parenting, however if and how they incorporated these values varied greatly. Miranda simply stated that her belief in equality was anti-racism, whereas others, to varying degrees, expressed that anti-racism values

guided specific actions in their lives and childrearing. The themes cited most frequently by these White parents when asked how being an anti-racist White person influences their parenting were choice of school and choice of neighborhood: 13 of the 20 (65%) respondents cited diversity as a motivating factor for choosing a neighborhood or a school for their children. Of the 18 parents who had school-age children from 6-18 years old, 17 had their child or children in a public school. The other had his child in a Waldorf elementary school program. Parents of children ages 3-5 had their children in a variety of public, co-op, or private daycares or preschools, or provided childcare themselves.

Six participants (30%) discussed living in a primarily White neighborhood either before they had children or early in their child's life, and then moving to a racially diverse neighborhood so their child would have exposure to people of Color. Five (25%) also mentioned the importance of exposure to people of various class, sexual orientation, or religious backgrounds as reasons for neighborhood choice. Many parents spoke with pride about the diversity of their neighborhood and also spontaneously discussed gentrification. Several who had lived in their neighborhoods for many years, acknowledged their neighborhood had once been primarily people of Color, but now families of Color were moving out and more Whites were moving in.

Of the 20 participants only 4 (20%) indicated they had lived in their diverse neighborhood when it was primarily people of Color. Although not specifically asked, the rest of the 13 who cited diversity as a reason for moving to their neighborhood may not have done so if the wave of gentrification had not already begun. The presence of other White and middle to upper class people may have indicated may have made the neighborhood seem "safer" or more desirable to them. Since several also spontaneously discussed gentrification, they are aware that the neighborhood they bought into will continue to become whiter. This was spoken about as an

unfortunate occurrence, however it is questionable as to whether or not these parent were subconsciously motivated by this knowledge when they bought their property.

School choice and school program.

Thirteen out of 20 parents (65%) interviewed mentioned school choice as being directly influenced by their anti-racism values, and several important themes emerged in the parents' discussions about schools. The majority of parents, 19 (95%) without being prompted, talked about what type of school their child attended. Of the 8 parents with elementary school age children, 5 stated their child or children were in a public elementary. Of the remaining 3, 1 had their child in a Waldorf school, 1 in a Co-op Elementary, and 1 in a group home school program. Of the 5 parents had children who were preschool age, (3-4 years-old) and no older children, 2 had their children in a pubic preschool program, 1 each in a private Montessori program, a private anti-bias preschool program, and a mainstream private preschool respectively. Two parents had their children in public middle schools and 2 in public high schools: one mainstream and one alternative. Finally, 1 parent had two college age daughters and grandchildren and indicated they were in the public school system but did not go into detail.

Also, most of the parents who stated their child was in a public school, also stated they were in a Montessori program, or an honors or advanced placement within that public school. Another few parents mentioned selecting a "better" public school than their neighborhood school and sending their child there. Many parents stated that the child's school was racially diverse, but that the program their child was in was majority White. Most parents expressed that a lack of diversity in the "better" program was regrettable, but they had a varying degree of personal conflict or concern about it.

Some parents talked about the conflict they felt about which program to place their child in. Some thought about this in terms of wanting their child to have exposure to children and teachers who were different from their own White cultural background and to be surrounded by diversity. However, although many of the parents that expressed valuing diversity, what diversity meant to them varied. For the majority, it seemed to mean the presence of people from a variety of racial and or cultural and ethnic groups, for some just different ethnic or cultural groups (because they or their school program did not use the term "race") and for one participant, diversity seemed to mean any presence of people of Color at all, regardless of how few.

Although most parents interviewed stated they valued diversity, there was evidence that they felt more comfortable with their children in programs with other White children. The most compelling evidence is that which was previously stated: although many reported their children were in diverse schools, they also reported their children were in the whiter program within the school. One mother whose son was the only White child in an Asian immersion program, referred several White friends and acquaintances to the school. She stated once they observed there was only one White child (her son) in the program they exclaimed: "there aren't any other White kids!" as the reason they were not interested in it. These parents overt acknowledgment that they were deterred by being in the minority illustrates that race is a factor when White parents choose a school. Race mattered more to these parents than all other qualities of the program. Although the anti-racist identified parents differed in that they professed to value racial diversity, based on their choices in practice most prefer environments that are predominantly white.

Some parents commented that institutional racism and tracking was happening in their school and expressed concern about programs being skewed along race and class lines as a

result. The group who was concerned with racial disparities in their child's school struggled

more with the decision about whether or not they should enroll their child in the non-honors or

traditional program that was majority children of Color. However, whether or not the parent felt

conflicted about it, virtually all of them chose to place their child in the program that was

considered "better" academically. Here Rhiannon described how tracking looks in her child's

elementary school:

> It's been interesting, at our school (local public elementary school in racially diverse
>
> neighborhood), there is a Montessori program, and a traditional program, and the
>
> Montessori one has been sort-of ivory tower-ish in terms of skin color. They worked
>
> hard to provide scholarships for the preschool-age children, because you have to pay for
>
> it at preschool age, so there is some mix.
>
> Interviewer: But it's primarily White?
>
> Rhiannon: Yeah, so therefore, I would say, in general, there is a White value system,
>
> White middle-upper middle class value system that is pretty well ensconced there. We
>
> switched my son to the traditional program this year… He's one of two or three White
>
> kids in the classroom. So the traditional program is widely diverse in race and culture,
>
> and language… The Montessori program is in the public school, and you start at (age) 3.
>
> You have to pay a decent chunk of change; I think it was $200 a month…so basically if
>
> you have money you get into the Montessori program at that age, and then you can stay
>
> in it until 5th grade. It turns out, in my opinion, the 1st – 3rd grade teachers were not very
>
> good at all, and we've been really impressed with his teacher this year. So I had this
>
> tension, of "Ok, we're in this Montessori program, and we're trying to live a purposeful

life of being surrounded by diversity, and reaching across racial barriers, and yet, the

Montessori program seemed to offer a much more *solid*, guaranteed early education.

And then, in my opinion really wasn't as solid as I had thought… it's been more of a

source of chagrin to have my kids in the Montessori program, because it has felt like

more of a privilege kind-of thing.

Rhiannon was one of very few parents who did move her children into the contemporary

program. Interestingly, despite the negative discourse among other White parents about the

contemporary program, she found the quality of education to be better than the Montessori and

felt relieved after switching her children. Rhiannon was the only parent who seemed at ease with

this decision. The others who discussed school choice and the possibility of placing their child

in whatever form of the contemporary program expressed stress and trepidation when they talked

about it. Most did not seem to think it was possible for the non-honors program to be high

quality, and it was unclear how they obtained this perspective on what the classrooms were

actually like. Some had personal involvement in the classrooms, but many likely based their

opinions on reputation. When dealing with the latter, coded racism is inherent in White

discourses about schools.

Several parents acknowledged that being middle or upper middle class, they could

remove their child at any time and place them in private school. Some parents described doing

that without analyzing the contradiction between this action and their anti-racism values. Teresa

was one such parent, describing her son Darren's experience in a predominately Black after-

school program:

He never used race, like he never said, "Mommy I don't like it here" but often, like when I'd go pick him up he'd be alone on the playground, playing by himself. 'Cause a lot of the kids were older, playing kickball and a lot of other really physical games, and you know he was a kindergartener. For me I really wanted him in the program, because it was so diverse. But the quality of the program wasn't good enough for me to feel good about the second year. I'm like, I can't really do this to my child for the sake of getting him exposed to diversity… I felt like in some ways it was about me, like, "I want him exposed, so I'm gonna keep him in this program" then I realized he wasn't getting a good experience there, because he was lonely, he was by himself a lot… I finished the year, so for him, it was just, I didn't tell him why I was taking him out, I just said, "We're gonna get a nanny now."

Teresa values her child being in a diverse atmosphere, but is unwilling to let him struggle with the social difficulties of being in the minority. Instead of advocating for improvements in this after school program, she hired a nanny for her home- a class privilege that most parents do not have. She justifies the choice to pull her son by stating that she is thinking of his best interest, rather than her own need for him to experience diversity, however she seems to think of anti-racism in terms of exposure to people of different cultural backgrounds rather than activism. When she describes the other ways in which she incorporates anti-racism, it is mainly in the form of books, foods, and music, rather than modeling inter-racial relationships herself or engaging in anti-racism in their community. A few parents articulated that they understood economic and racial privilege factored into their decision-making and they struggled with whether to place their child in the "better" school or "better" program or the more diverse program.

Shayla talked openly about the contradiction between her anti-racism values and her school choices:

When it came time for preschool, there's co-op preschool and not co-op preschool, and I tried both. We did a Spanish immersion preschool, and a co-op preschool. And I like the co-op preschool because that's what I wanted as a parent… I looked for co-ops that had some racial and socio-economic diversity and there is some in the one we went to but they're certainly White dominated places. Co-op preschool is a White dominated thing in the Pacific Northwest anyway. Um, so going on to public school, I didn't put the regular program on my list of choices at that school, I put the Montessori program on my list of choices. I made sure to check and make sure that there were African American kids in those classes, and their were, but it certainly wasn't the regular classes at the school, which was almost all African American, and I wasn't willing to go there. Not because of it being all African American, in fact that would be a great experience for Elijah, but it didn't have a reputation for being a program that was good for those kids, never mind my kid. And so I wanted a good program for my kid, and it to be racially and socio-economically if possible, diverse... Montessori has some non-White kids… maybe it's 45-50% White. But the contemporary program is maybe 80% African American, 10% African, and some White kids, and some mix of Latino kids and stuff. And so I've been thinking about moving my son into the contemporary program… So I really struggled with that right? Why should I do that? Because my son likes it. It's a good program for him, so ok, I'll take it. But where is my value here?... Do I move him because I want him to have that experience of being not in the majority, as a male, as a White male, and learning from an African American woman in particular,

in a historically Black neighborhood?... We have gentrification in the area I live, so all the people like me are looking for "Where's the safe place to send my child?" are seeing "Like ok, there are White people at this elementary school and they are in the Montessori program." So I want to be able to say, "The contemporary program is a really good program, and we want everybody to be in every program, please send your kids!" But how can I do that if my kid isn't in it?

Shayla did engage in anti-racism work at her child's elementary school, working to fight a school closure that negatively impacted children of Color in their neighborhood. However, she states that when what's in her child's best interest does not converge with her anti-racism activities she is not motivated to take action. Her husband and other family members don't understand why she would even consider it. Anti-racism is positioned as Shayla's value, and that her husband (who holds a high paying job) would be comfortable sending their children to private school.

In the above scenario, Shayla also consulted the school principal about moving her child into the contemporary program, and was told not to do it. She wondered why, and states she is in the same situation this academic year, still considering whether or not to move Elijah into the contemporary program Shayla is the family decision maker about education and thus far has kept her child in the Montessori program. She could take a radical stand, however her hesitation coupled with the pressure and lack of support from other stakeholders keeps her in a position that ultimately upholds White advantage. Shayla identified herself as parent who was outspoken and involved in her children's schools (as evidences by her work against the previous school closure). It is also worthy of note in terms of White solidarity that the principal would advise her so strongly against switching her child to the contemporary program.

Maria is another parent who clearly described the contradictions between her own values

and behaviors around school choice:

We live in a really diverse neighborhood, more diverse when we moved in than it is now,

but it's still really diverse… our neighborhood middle school, it just it just really felt…

like a prison or something. Where like thinking about sending my kids into this middle

school, where you're welcomed by signs on the window that say things like, "3 Tardies

=Suspension, and 3 Suspensions = Expulsion" You know, like I want my kids to be

excited about learning, not feeling like it's you know, punishment, I want them to feel

good about being at school. So checking out my neighborhood middle school, it was

clear that it was like, "God this is not what I want my kids to be exposed to" and so I visit

a bunch of other middle schools around the city, so the best middle school I thought, *the*

best was actually in (White neighborhood) and so low-and-behold, it's not a very diverse

middle school, and so thinking about that, balancing, *trying* to balance, and recognizing

that there is never a balance that you feel positive about. That it's always, there's always

a trade-off…. You know that mama-bear kicks in. And really feeling like you want *the*

best for your kids. And for me as a parent who was trying to be cognizantly anti-racist, it

becomes really complicated, where it feels like there's a choice, between sort-of a "good"

education, vs. a "sucky" education that's more diverse. So how you weigh one vs. the

other, it's just a losing proposition… As a White middle-class parent, um, that there is

that fall back on privilege, that bottom line, I have known that if the school system failed

my kids, that I have the income and the resources to pull them and put them in private

school, and so, you know, really at the same time, working for racial equity, knowing

how privilege plays out in a way that's like, how you can um, how you can both accept

that as a reality and work to change it, and to try and communicate to your kids that

you're working to change it… So it's the contradiction between choices where it feels

like there's not great choices but that in and of itself, makes really clear the importance of

doing the work you know, in the middle of trying to change the system, you're also a part

of the system.

Rachelle commented on the same conflict between anti-racism values and practice when her son

began to fall behind in his Chinese Immersion program:

I could pluck him out of this setting in which he you know, wasn't succeeding.

And you know, put him into a different preschool, in which there would not only be more

White kids, but more middle-class kids and families, where, you know he and his dad and

I would have an easier time building relationships, we could have those kids over more

easily, and with the language, he would be a kid who is excelling because he's smart,

because he has advantages, because he gets help at home. Um, but it went against what I

believed in, to do that. It's then lead me to think about, later on, and when he gets older,

right, the issues that White parents always cite for pulling their kids out of public schools

in urban areas, in places where White children are in the minority, it's always public

safety, and quality of education. I can wrap my head around quality of education…

We're not in Seattle high schools in the early 90s, when there was a lot of um, you know

guns and violence. But what if? What if a shift occurs again? How, you know, when you

have options, but you're trying to work against racism, and you're trying to raise kids

who are different, how far will you go, in a way that might put them in danger, or created

forced sacrifices on them. And is that really a sacrifice? Those are the things I struggle with.

Racial make-up of the children's school programs.

Another finding was that only 5 of the 20 parents (25%) had their child in a school program that was almost all children of Color. Fifteen (75%) had their children in schools that were racially diverse or predominately of Color overall, but majority White in the honors or Montessori program in which their child was enrolled. Of the 5 with children in programs that were predominately children of Color, 4 (80%) of them had their child enrolled in schools that were majority Asian, including two Asian language immersion programs. It is noteworthy that 4 White anti-racist parents (20%) felt comfortable with their child in programs with majority Asian children, but only 1 (5%) parent stated they sent their child to a school program that was majority Black or Latino children. This suggests that White people, even those with anti-racism values may have particularly strong biases against African Americans.   The tendency for White people to equate the presence of African Americans with deficit or poor quality of a neighborhood or school has been described in previous research such as Johnson and Shapiro's (2003) study. It is important to note that the White people interviewed for this study identified themselves as anti-racist but in this respect exhibit the same pattern as the average White Americans interviewed for Johnson and Shapiro's study on the neighborhood and school choices of White families.

Some specific examples seen in the data in this study are Teresa's initial enrollment of her son in a majority Black afterschool program and then removing him. Shayla is still considering whether or not she will remove her child from the Montessori program at her public elementary school and place him in the contemporary program. Ruth mentioned having her middle-school

aged son in her under-resourced local public middle school that closed the following year. She fought the closure with other neighborhood parents and wanted her son to remain in the school. However now he is attending a middle school that is somewhat racially diverse and is majority middle-high income families where tracking children towards the honors program falls along racial and class lines.

The use of books, media, toys and music.

Eleven of 20 participants (55%) mentioned the use of books when trying to instill anti-racism values in their White children. The parents sought out books that represented people of Color or that explained history in a developmentally appropriate way. Two parents (10%) also described going to the public library in their neighborhood with their child, and expressed that they valued the diversity of the staff and patrons of the library. Five of the participants (25%) mentioned media as one way anti-racism and parenting intersect. Three of the parents (15%) stated that they selected specific shows for their child to watch because they had characters of Color or of various cultural backgrounds. One of the 4 (5%) stated that they limited the television and movies their children were exposed to because of the racist content in the mainstream media. And one, (5%) Stephanie, stated that she allowed her teenage child to watch television, but asks her to analyze what she watches and points out images of White supremacy and racism:

> She loves Glee- and I have learned just to be with teenagers and just be in the experience
> with them and not say anything, then revisit, and implement, and implement things. So
> we've been watching Glee, and I don't say anything, then a couple days later I'll
> comment later, "Well isn't that interesting, did you notice this, how people are now

making racism as joke or that it's cool to joke about? What do you think about that?...

She's in 8th grade, and she's very well aware of it. We deconstruct a lot.

Stephanie's stance would be consistent with anti-racist thought because her conversations with her daughter teach her to be a critical thinker and analyze the racialized dynamics in her environment.

Shayla reflected on her children's toys and the contradiction between her anti-racism values and her actions:

Play mobile has a lot of pink people. And almost exclusively in the knights' collections, which they particularly like, it's all pinkish; it's from Germany, so you know, White people. Um, and I've, we've written to the company about it, but I still, we still buy them, and this Christmas I found sets of play mobile with people of different, like some brown people and some Asian people, and so I bought them and I talked to Elijah about why I was buying them and how frustrated I still am that this company doesn't recognize that people come in all different shades. But you know, I still buy that. So, it's like, again, my kids really love these toys, and they have good creative play with them, but they um, you know, they don't represent what I wish were true in the world but I'm also really recognizing because I am White and it's like uh, it doesn't… let's see. It just affirms our superiority, it doesn't hurt, it's not, I often think, what would I do, if I were a brown-skin parent, and I was looking for toys that reflected my child, and there's almost nothing out there? There's a little bit, but almost nothing. I think about that, but then I go, "Well, but that's not my situation, and here's the toys that my kids got from their

Grandparents, and like here it is" so I'm aware of it, but I haven't operationally done anything radical about it. And that makes me uncomfortable but I just go on.

Again, as with her ambivalence about which program to send her child too, Shayla hasn't "done anything radical about it." She is not at ease with her lack of action, however, she still does not take a stand. What stops these parents from taking the radical actions they state are needed to create racial equity? Why wouldn't Shayla simply not buy the playmobil, and make the school change? For parents like Shayla and Maria that indicate a nuanced understanding of institutional racism, the bottom line seems to be protecting the opportunity and comfort of their own children: the "mama bear" effect. As Shayla stated, "it only affirms our superiority, it doesn't hurt." However, must it hurt for action to be taken? Why does Whites' awareness of racism so often lead to bad feelings but not action?

Talking about skin color.

Seven of 20 of participants (35%) named talking about skin color as a way they implemented anti-racism in their child's lives. This was one of the top four themes brought up by the parents in this study, and the theme parents seemed to feel the most comfortable talking about. Many used books or mentioned activities in their child's school in which they talked about skin color and diversity, especially for elementary school age children. This was the case for Lila and her 3-year-old:

I try to as far as like trying to get books in, she's so young it's hard to broach the topics. Sometimes I feel like I'm forcing it too much, like she was saying something about like she was talking about the different colors of her animals and different colors of fur, and so I was like "Ooh we can mention now that there are different colors of animals, and

different colors of fur and different colors of hair, and different colors of skin and isn't

that all so neat." And so trying to figure out times to do that without shoving it down her

throat… we'd already had some books showing diversity with with different ethnicities

and then a book that's a little old for her called Tar Beach and talking about the African

American experience with tenements and um it refers back to share cropping and it's it's

so it's over her head but at the same time, it won't be at some point. So I've been trying

to pull in stories about other cultures and stories that discuss different ethnicities or even

somebody that has a different skin color you know and let's discuss the picture a little bit,

and um "Hey, does that person remind you of so-and-so at school?" Or does this person

remind of that person, because you know she'll bring it up. It's like so-and-so, "Yes it

is." So it's kind of involved like that. She doesn't um she doesn't speak up and go up

"Oh that Black person" or "oh that White person" I've never heard her say anything like

that." Um, she will say something like, "Oh that old person" and at that point I treat it the

same way as if somebody said Black or White or whatever, I say, you know "Yes, she is

old what else is there about her?"

Here Willa describes conversations about skin color with her 3 and 5-year-old children:

Well, my kids would comment, they would comment on people, because we live on a

busy street with lots of pedestrian traffic. So they would comment on people, that fat

guy, that brown guy sometimes it was by their clothes, sometimes by the way they

looked. I've never shushed them, because I remember being shushed for saying Black,

like that's a bad word or something. Um, and we would talk about how we look and their

skin, and I would never say it's White or Black, but I would say it's kind of pinkish, kind

of pinkish, whitish, yellowish, brownish" and we would talk about that. We're Christians, so we talk a lot about how God made people all different colors, and how your hair is brown, and her hair is blond, and his hair is black and I think I tried to point out, when they started noticing differences, I would point them out as just you know, my purse is black and leather, just a fact, not carrying any weight other than what it is. I would always describe their skin color as what their literal skin color is, and I still try to shy away from Black and White.

Wendy also has a 3-year-old daughter with whom she discusses skin color:

Well we've already had a discussion about skin. She's the one that brought it up, at 3 she's just very tuned in. And she said, "What is that Black woman doing?" Talking about a woman when we were in the truck together, so we just started talking about, "You noticed she has brown skin" you know, "What color is your skin? What color is my skin, what color is teachers" so we've been trying to, so we've been talking about skin color, I've been trying to do that pretty regularly, and then um, and then we also I've been really trying to have books that have brown children, so that she can, so it's not just you know, White characters in her books, just familiarity of you now, there's all sorts of people. So, at 3 (laughs) that's where we are! You know!

Lila, Wendy and Willa are examples of a more colorblind approach. Wendy repeatedly stated that her daughter was "Only 3-years-old" during the interview, implying there was not much anti-racism work to do with her yet. Wendy and Willa both had an aversion to using the terms "race, Black, or White" with their children so as to not reinforce racism. As discussed by anti-racism scholars, this "shying" away from using the terms Black and White could be detrimental.

As her children get older they may think White supremacy is the natural order of things rather than a system of domination. At one point in the interview, she wondered what her children might internalize based on the drug-dealing of African Americans on her block. Perhaps once racial equity is truly achieved, we won't need to address race. According to literature however, until that time to not to teach White children about racism allows them to internalize it unchecked and be more likely to act on it consciously and unconsciously.

Stephanie approached the skin color differently, stressing Whiteness and privilege instead of diversity:

> When she was four we had the mala on our wrists, with white beads, and I was able to teach her, when she was in middle childhood that when she looked at it was a reminder that she was White, because it was the only thing to remind her, to remind ourselves that we were White, everyday, and she stopped wearing that maybe a year and a half ago, but yeah, I think that has done something, where she understands now, she has this language and she understands White privilege… I think the most important thing for my daughters to know is to be allies: we must speak up whenever possible, even beyond friendships and community is stepping up to say something as a White person in all White situations, just speak up, whenever there is racism.

Stephanie names racism often and directly, and encourages her daughter to speak up when she witnesses it. However this still reduces anti-racism to calling out individuals rather than addressing the deeper structural system.

Anti-Racism activism in their child's school.

Six of the 20 participants (30%) mentioned engaging in anti-racism within their child's school. Examples of the type of anti-racist or racial equity work they did was organizing parent's groups to address issues of racism/unexamined privilege and promote diversity within the school, work against under-resourced school closure, collaborating with teachers to address incidents of racism. Here Maria describes what she did in her children's school:

> In the grade-school they went to I was co-facilitator of an anti-racist group of parents and teachers. The idea was to try and push the school in a direction of working for racial equity… even in this school that is you know, is supposed to be in their little mission statement it said something about racial justice or diversity or something, but in reality, even with those words, the outcomes were still the same, the disproportionality in outcomes for kids of Color at that school were still the same, so how playing a leadership role, co-facilitating with a woman of Color, and really trying to get to a point where it's not just "Blah blah blah blah blah" but *really* trying to turn that "Blah blah blah blah blah" into a different reality.

These parents are channeling their energy towards anti-racism efforts within the schools their children attend. Yet what if all these parents were to align together to do racial equity work for the city school district as a whole? The micro-level work within the schools is a worthy cause but is limited in scope.

Exposure to parents' anti-racism work.

Five of the 20 parents (25%) mentioned that their children were exposed to their anti-racism work, either because anti-racism was part of their job, or because they engaged in anti-

racism work voluntarily in their community, or both. Although mentioned less-frequently than neighborhood and school choice and discussing skin color, the exposure of children to parent's anti-racism work is significant. This demonstrates to the children that anti-racism is an important part of life that Whites should participate in, not ignore, or simply theorize about.

Given that children take in all the parent's cues, verbal and non-verbal, children will learn whether or not their parents think it is worthwhile to put time and energy into racial justice work. If White parents take no action, this sends a powerful message to their children that it is not worth the effort. Nineteen of the parents (95%) interviewed in the total sample demonstrated an awareness of racism at some point in the interview, and 20 of 20 (100%) stated they value diversity. However, the parents who shared that they took action against racism in their communities or through their place of work are those whose anti-racism efforts went beyond valuing diversity and equality. Thus these parents would be considered further along in the progression of White racial identity development as they are engaged in activism and modeling or including their children in their work.

Talking about racism.

When asked how they incorporate anti-racism into their childrearing, many of the participants described talking to their kids about racism. The depth and manner in which they talked about it varied, such as teaching critical thinking or an anti-oppression framework, talking about the history of racism and struggle for racial equality, and talking about the structural or interpersonal racism the parents and child witnessed in their everyday life. Five of 20 parents (25%) described teaching their child an anti-oppression framework, or explaining to them how to analyze systems of power and privilege in order to understand the racialized world around them. Six of 20 (30%) stated that they discussed incidents of racism in their children's lives. Several of

the parents with young children mentioned struggling to find the right words or to discuss racism in an age-appropriate way. The following excerpts of dialogue represent some of the different ways these White parents discussed racism with their children. Here James describes trying to discuss institutional racism with his 7 year-old daughter:

> She and Mira (who is Ethiopian) were really close friends, and that girl dropped out of the school, well, her mother pulled her out… and I had a conversation over tea with her afterwards to try and understand what really happened, and there was some sort-of misunderstanding between her and the teacher, you know Waldorf sort of has their own understanding, of when kids are supposed to start reading, and um, less rigid about ok, "They need to start reading in the 1ˢᵗ grade" it's not that big a deal for them, they don't think about it in those terms… from the mother's perspective as a person of Color, they're, they have less of a safety net, if something goes wrong, so uh, there was also some conflict with the teacher, and so uh, so how did I discuss it with my daughter um, yeah, I don't remember exact conversations but, uh you know obviously I try to focus on the detail of how is it relevant to her life… I think in general I didn't try to have too many discussions about why this girl wasn't at the school, actually no that's not true, I think I probably said, "You know it's difficult for her, as a brown-skinned child uh, a lot of obstacles for children who don't have White skin in society" and uh I mean I don't remember having lengthy conversations but I probably would have said at least that much.

James is making an effort to support this family of Color in his daughter's program, however he struggles to find the words. His statement "I probably would have said at least that much"

indicates he is unsure of what he actually said. He acknowledged during the interview that he had many doubts and felt very new to anti-racist thought. Willa talked to her 5 year-old this way:

> My son has learned a lot in his classroom, so he'll come home and give us facts, and we'll turn around and say, "Did you also know this, and did you know that there were these other people, and they marched" So I think we just try to tell stories, as best as we can. And we say "You know when Grammy and Grampy were kids, they didn't get to go to school with Black kids, they only went to school with people who were their color! What do you think about that?" And my son is just like, "What? That's crazy!" And we kind of say, yeah, that is crazy. I wonder if we are erring to far on the side of "back then" that's what people did, and isn't that silly, and not being as aware of what we do today, but, I think for kids we're keeping it simple. So we've talked about MKL, and Medgar Evers, he knows, I don't know if the girl knows, but the 5-year-old knows, we've told him that Martin Luther King died, because somebody didn't like what he was saying, and Medgar Evers died because somebody didn't like what he was saying. Um, but, because of people like them, standing up for what they believed, now you get to go to school with, and he has a bunch of little friends that I'll name off by name.

Although she is teaching her child some of the history of the civil rights movement, Willa wonders if she focuses too much on "back then." If she continues to teach her children racism is a thing of the past, they may assume the current inequities between Whites and people of Color are due to personal shortcomings of the latter, rather than racism. Also, the use of the term "silly" to refer to segregation dismisses the magnitude of segregation.

Ruth uses her family's experiences of marginalization based on religion to help them understand how racism operates:

My kids are Jewish which means they experience internalized anti-Semitism…we talk about what does it feel like to be on the outside? We talk about an even starting line and structural inequities in the system.

Jesse talked about Black history and the civil rights movement this way to her 8 and 11 year-old boys:

I feel like when it comes up I explain it or I've explained—before I've talked about, like, on Martin Luther King Day or when they mentioned, like, the Montgomery bus boycotts. Kinda talking about just some of the history I know of. Like all the organizing that went before that and, you know, for example, there wasn't, people have this idea, um, like the boycotts was just that, you know, she just really got tired and sat in the back of the bus and it was just this random woman, right? When the reality is it was like 3 years of, you know, hardcore organizing and all this preparation. And so just giving them a sense of, um, how much organizing it takes to shift things and it's not usually just a random individual who just happens to do something brilliant.

When her daughter was six Laura framed the conversation about racism this way:

I would try and explain to her sort-of how groups of people don't have the same access to resources, and get stuck in a bottom kind of a place, so that effects all kinds of things… try to sort of explain to her it was more than just this isolate incident that it was sort of part of the bigger way that society is organized…I would always try and give her a context and try and address it on some level.

The previous three statements articulate that racism (or oppression) are current and systemic. These responses would be consistent with anti-racist approaches to teaching children.

Discussions about slavery.

Three of the parents that talked about racism with their children brought up discussing slavery with their child. Given the tremendous significance of slavery and it's legacy in the U.S, it is important to look at how these contemporary White parents with anti-racism values address it. The spontaneous discussion of it during the interview suggests that some parents consider it an important issue and want to be clear about it with their children. Lila grew up in the south, and is the mother of a four-year-old girl. She reflects on her own up-bringing and what she is trying to do differently for her child:

> We were White, so we didn't need to discuss the racism, we didn't need to discuss slavery. Which every now and then that's already come up with my daughter and I've tried to explain, "At one point people thought it was ok to own other people"… It was a long time ago, and that it was different. She understands the idea of different. And that it was a different part of the country, but at one point, people thought they could tell other people what to do… "This is what you must do" and you had to do it, or else somebody could hurt you. But at the same time I can't make it too scary of a concept.

Lila is trying to explain the history of slavery to her young child and keeps it simple and developmentally appropriate. However she does not name race, perhaps wanting to distance their family's relationship to slavery as White southerners. Later in the interview, Lila expresses more thoughts about slavery and the White South:

Lila: The Civil War –not all about slavery- primarily economics. And, and very and

trying to explain that that's one of the reasons why it's it wasn't about "Oh you took my

slaves from me" but it was, "You took my only means of supporting my family away"

and that was um, and that that still hits hard to this day in that area. You know? Families

were just left devastated.

Interviewer: You mean slave-owning families?

Lila: No, I mean any, most of them. So many of the families, and slaves were owned by,

I mean you could just have one or two, but I don't mean just the plantation owners could

no longer pay for the tailor, or you know, pay for shipping…the people that um helped

the people what were serving the plantation life, they no longer had a way to support

themselves either, I mean it was this whole kind of trickle down effect… it just kind of

kept going and the you've got, I mean you know and then like Sherman's march through,

I mean that he literally just burned everything. People's family homes were gone.

Things that they had saved up were gone. People were running off, you know, so

suddenly, you you have families that are disinvested who had been there for a century.

And suddenly they're homeless… so there is that tension but it's having the

understanding of kind of that history, and and trying to explain all of that as well as just

also explaining why, it although it was so wrenching to the economy, it had to be done,

you know and that's the other side. Is trying to explain, yeah it absolutely devastated the

south… but also understanding this had to be done, because of ethics and the way you

would and the way you would want to be treated and treat someone else. And trying to

explain all of that to her… so it'll probably have to be a conversation as a teenager. So and maybe my understanding will have shifted more about that.

Lila does not name Whiteness as informing her perspective although her passionate story represents an exclusively White perspective on the Civil War and the economy in the South. She wants to communicate that White Southerners experienced material loss when slavery ended and that White families of modest income had slaves and were economically devastated. However she does not acknowledge what was perpetrated by the White slave owners: the horror of slavery itself, the impact on the African people who were kidnapped, and the tremendous suffering and loss of life experienced over generations. She glosses over these dimensions and the justification of the institution of slavery by racist ideology of White superiority. At the end of her statement, she acknowledges it's possible that her understanding of Southern history will shift, implicitly implying that perhaps her analysis is lacking. She also expressed frustration with being judged by White people from the Pacific North West, who express classist and judgmental assumptions that all Southern Whites are "racist rednecks" and disavow their own racism or their own connection to slavery as White Americans. Being from the South Lila cannot separate herself as easily and the projections of White people in Pacific North West have contributed to her defensiveness.

Rachelle, a community organizer, also mentioned trying to explain slavery to her young son while teaching him about race and ethnicity:

So I kind of got this hook on talking about race and culture, and kind of where people came from, and where he came from, from Ireland, and England, ad we would start using a map talking about different children, and the teachers… and it was in some ways,

maybe easier because a lot of the teachers and kids actually came from those other countries. But when we got to African Americans, I was like, "Ok, we've got to say more about this" because people didn't come by choice. So I ended up with one day when he was like 4-4 ½ he was in the car and we hit on the middle passage, and you know, I thought, "What am I doing to my kid? I'm talking to my 4-year-old about slave ships?" but he kind of incorporated it, he asked questions about it, and I don't know. Honestly, I can tell you, I don't know that these are the right ways to go about these things… it all started with talking about where Asher's people came from, and he would want to know specifically…so I said, "Well this is different because Asher's parents didn't come by choice." "Well what do you mean, how can people come somewhere if it's not their choice?" "Well you know, his people were forced onto ships, and brought half-way across the world to be workers, and to be forced to be workers without being paid. And to do things in this country like grow vegetables, and grow cotton that we made into clothing, and they were forced, you know without any money, without any choice in the matter." And then I would turn it back on him and say, "What do you think about that? Does that sound like a fair thing to you?"

Rachelle took the opportunity to educate her son in a developmentally appropriate way about the history of slavery in the United States. She expresses that she questioned herself, worrying that she might be harming her child by talking to him about slave ships. Still, she continues explaining it to him and states that he took in the information and asked her questions. Rachelle admits she was not prepared for the conversation but was compelled to be honest rather than gloss over a discussion that was difficult for her to have.

Leanne noticed her 8-year-old son Tom romanticizing colonialism in play, and took the opportunity to explain slavery this way:

Your ancestors came over on boats, and they paid the passage, and they chose to come here. Other's people ancestors were brought here *in chains,* to work and suffer, and die. And so, that's their back ground, and that stuff didn't *end* 150 years ago at the end of slavery, but it *persists,* in poverty, in what people think of themselves, in how the majority continues to treat people. I did go off. It's kind of scary, I don't want to be quite as didactic as that. I wanted him to understand the reality of what he is saying, and so, that slavery isn't a joking matter, that it's a reality, it still exists in the world, it's not eradicated, and this is what it means. It's not a historical role where you get to wear costumes and everything's ok, but it's a *real* experience that real people suffered, and we have the affects of it today.

Leanne does not name race, but in her relatively brief statement she addressed Tom's family history as European Americans and clearly expresses that the negative impact of slavery is enduring and relevant to current inequities in U.S. society. Only a few parents mentioned slavery specifically during the interview and gave examples of these conversations, of those all seemed to find it challenging to strike the balance of providing truthful information in a developmentally appropriate way. One of the 3 glossed over the history, the other 2 seemed to provide a slightly more thorough perspective.

White children expressing racism against Black children.

Another theme that arose in the data is that unsolicited, many parents gave examples of their White child stating something negative specifically about Black or African American

people. Despite the parents placing a value on anti-racism and having discussions about racial justice and diversity, several gave examples of times their children expressed that they didn't like Black children, or thought they were mean, or bad. One parent, Leanne, talked about Tom's statement about African American boys in his public school elementary class:

> There are a few Black kids, not very many in that school, mostly African immigrants but some American Black, and uh, (sighs) Tom hasn't made particular friends with them, and a couple he says, "They're mean, they're mean" and so I started thinking about how Black kids are suspended more, and get in trouble for being boisterous in the classroom, and how much of that is teacher perception, and how much of that is student behavior. Because I don't think Tom is making stuff up, he's too little to be doing that stuff.

Leanne is aware of some of the ways racism impacts the educational experience of Black elementary school children, however she still suspects (because Tom is too little to make it up) that they may actually be acting out "meanly" rather than responding to their environment. She doesn't mention the possibility Tom has internalized racism and thus potentially perceiving the same behavior from the Black boys in his class as more aggressive. According to the research by age 5 Tom is well aware of race and racial stereotypes and forming his own ideas about his environment. Willa also commented on her 3-year-old daughter's negative statement about a Black child in her school:

> My 3-year-old said something one time a few weeks ago like, "I don't like that kid because he's brown" and my husband and I were freaked out, and we were trying not to freak out, like to react too much, but we'd be like, "Why? What do you mean? Daddy's kinda pinkish, and I'm kinda yellowish, what do you think about that?" But she gets

there's some kind of cultural difference there. I don't know why for her that means she doesn't like them. But we're trying to work with that.

Rachelle's son has been in a school that is staffed and attended by primarily Asian people. She talked about her 5-year-old son's comments, which brought up significant shame for her:

They opened up a new classroom, and it ended up being like four African American kids in that classroom, and there hadn't been any other African American kids at this school. …and my son came home, like talking trash about some of the African American kids, and saying things like "I don't like those kids" and I would push and say, "let's talk about why you don't like them"… And he was probably four at the time, and what he could articulate is, "I don't like their hair…they don't look like me or any of my friends."

Rachelle engaged her son in Socratic questioning to get to the bottom of his assumptions. She took action at home and met with his teacher school to talk about her observations and help promote anti-bias curricula in the program. She was able to push through the shame she felt about her son's comments and acted in a thoughtful manner but admitted when it happened she "couldn't imagine even to politicized friends" talking about her young White boy expressing racism. It is of note that her shame kept her from sharing the comment with her friends. Anti-racism principles hold that all White people (including children) internalize racism and it must be acknowledged and then addressed. Thus Rachelle lost the opportunity to model to other parents in her community how to handle such an incident when it occurs.

White children internalizing entitlement or superiority.

Several of the parents gave examples of their White boys being given some sort of "special status" or being treated well, and many parents talked about their White children being

intelligent. Jana told a poignant story about her son, Aiden, who is in a Mandarin immersion

program. He is the only White child in the class, which is otherwise attended by Chinese and

Korean American students.

> This is the Chinese Weekly, and they took out a full page ad and of course they put the
>
> one White child's picture, I thought when I got it, God…it almost made me feel guilty
>
> like why did you pick my one kid? I know she (the teacher) is trying to reach out to have
>
> more of a diverse, but this is all in Chinese (the paper) and like so, I'm assuming that a
>
> Chinese person, it made me feel like… I don't know… he was singled out because of his
>
> race and because she even feels like that's what people want to see… But then I thought
>
> maybe it would mean that she thought, "Hey! We can even teach these White children
>
> Chinese!"

As we talked Jana became emotional, grappling with the possibility that her school choice might

be reinforcing a sense of superiority in her child:

> I guess it upsets me because my goal as a parent is that he not experience privilege, just
>
> for a little bit. Because he's gonna experience it his whole life. Then he gets like the
>
> school mascot, you know placement or whatever. And I'm like shoot, is he getting it,
>
> maybe he's getting it even more because he's the only White one!

> Jana shared two more examples of Aiden's experiences in school, involving the school

Christmas program:

> Jana: They make him Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer… so then all the other kids were
>
> the other reindeer, and like um, then he was Santa, in the second part too. And then they
>
> had um, some sort-of baby Jesus one, and he was baby Jesus.

Interviewer: So all the lead roles. Main characters.

Jana: Right, lead roles, and people generally thought of as White I guess… Now he is pretty out-going too, he puts on a show, so that plays into it. And what I've kind of noticed about Chinese children is that they're quiet and compliant, and not so likely to be dramatic. So maybe that had something to do with it… But I was watching it again and again, kind of like that ad, I was just like why is my kid playing all of the White characters, why? And I guess the answer is because that's what people think he looks like, that Santa's a White guy, Jesus was a White guy.

In one final example, Jana shares with me a picture from Aiden's yearbook. In the book there is a description of each child and what they do. In the picture Aiden has on a pair of fake reading glasses and he is next to a Chinese girl. The caption says, "Follow me I can read for you." Jana states they call him "Dr. Wilson" and while she acknowledges that he is a good reader, she wonders why the teachers in the school think he can teach the other children. She is uncomfortable with the idea that her son has been given a special status, but so far has not discussed her discomfort with the teachers or explore their reasons for casting him in all the distinguished roles in the program. She notes, in an environment run by women of Color, she is surprised her son would be treated better than the other children.   Jana does not want to believe that her son will internalize superiority but it is hard to imagine that he wouldn't with all the special attention he receives in his school.

Jana was not the only parent who mentioned the portrayal of Jesus as White operating on the sense of self of her White boy. Leanne also shared an example of her son Tom expressing White supremacy, which disturbed her:

I remember we were walking right near here down the street, and he said something about God being *White.* Well first of all, we're not a religious household, we don't talk about God, he probably hears it from friends, or relatives, but *God being White?* And I lit into him, like where did you get this!? And what do you think that means?... And it's because he's seen pictures. You know, when Jesus is pictured, he's almost always White and he extrapolated from that.

Leanne also described Tom's experiences in school which bear a striking resemblance to those described by Jana above:

Tom, he's smart, he tested into the APP programs, we've known every since he was very little, that he's bright, he's engaged, and he's socially adept too which is a nice combination. And he's pretty. So Tom's the golden child, and because, he also had 2 years of Cantonese in preschool, he excels in his class, and so he has been the star, one of a couple of stars, but the main one in his immersion class. It was the first class in that school doing Chinese immersion, he has been on the front page of the city paper, and he has represented, been one of a group of 10 kids representing the international school speaking in front of 900 people at a fundraising breakfast… he's picked, partly because he's White, that's the thing. Here is somebody who is not Chinese, who's speaking Chinese! There are Asian kids in his class too, but they'll never get picked. Because then what's the big deal… one of his friends, who's Black, and she's very smart, and she's a pistol, her too, but not as much as him. It wasn't her on the front page, it was Tom. Because he's pretty and he has blond hair, and he's growing it out, (Sigh). I haven't wanted to say, "You're just getting the attention because you're White" because it's

much more than that. He's bright, and he's engaged, and you know, he has more facility in the language… if he continues to be the star, I will help him be aware of the different elements of why. And I don't want him to feel ashamed or guilty, it's just you have to understand what's up. Why were he and Gina chosen, a White kid and a Black kid. Who are both smart, and good, but they're not the only ones. It's not just being White, but he has other advantages, middle class, educated, good-looking, all these things, they open more doors for a person, and so how can he, at the very least, have it be benign, but hopefully put it to good use, make the world a better place.

Leanne also stated that Tom got special attention when their family traveled to China:

Tom was a rock star. White kid, growing his hair out, so he had longish blond hair, *spoke Cantonese.* Teenage girls would stop him on the street to get their picture with him, I told him, "You will never be this popular again in your life, so you should enjoy it." And his eyes were shining, and he just loved it, and we explained to him that he was getting attention because he was a foreigner, and because he was able to speak the language and that's still pretty unusual there. (Sigh) and we told him too that not all foreigners would be treated the same. Black people there are treated on the whole quite badly. Literally called the Black devils, and I've heard that from more than one person, so I believe it (sighs) So, we did tell him that he's getting this attention, partly because of his color.

Leanne is teaching Tom about White privilege by talking about the special treatment he receives. But as in the case with Jana's son, his mother's teachings may not be enough to counter such a strong reinforcement of false superiority. Why are these boys singled out in their classrooms? Neither mother here has taken steps to address this in their child's school.

Gentrification.

Gentrification was a theme that spontaneously arouse in the data. The majority of participants, 13 of 20 (65%) stated neighborhood choice was an aspect of integrating anti-racism values into their parenting and many of them cited it first, indicating it is the primary way in which they identify their anti-racism values in practice. Thirteen of 20 (65%) also stated they lived in diverse neighborhoods and within the conversations about their neighborhood, 9 of 20 (45%) described gentrification. Lila was one such parent:

I like where we are, our neighborhood we're actually a very diverse neighborhood, although really it's a lot of gay White men (Laughs).

Here Lila contradicts herself by stating her neighborhood is diverse and then "really" that there are a lot of gay White men. This illustrates the difficulty in assessing Whites' racial perceptions. Does she perceive the neighborhood as diverse because it *used* to be?

Jess described her neighborhood this way:

Our neighborhood is very clearly White… not entirely but primarily and culturally it's like White middle-class, um. And there's really more White people living there now then black people and I feel like that's shifted. But then it's like three blocks down the street is primarily African American, you know? …and then you get to our street where it's primarily White with a few African Americans kind of right in our little, you know, few block area… It's only three blocks, right?, but it feels like a very far distance… the places we go are the other places in the area that are still primarily white, you know?, and, um. You know, like even on Rainier, it's like one side of the street is more the new, White, richer businesses and the other side, there's still, like, a few more Black-owned

businesses or a Black bar or something, you know what I mean? And so th—so our

neighborhood is actually, when I think about it, the larger neighborhood is actually pretty

racially diverse, but there's a way that we're able and choose to stay in a very White part

of that neighborhood.

Ray described his neighborhood this way:

So my wife has lived in her house since the mid-80s, and even since the time we've been

together, the Filipino family next door sold, and it's a White family, the African

American family two-doors down sol, and it's a White couple, the elderly Filipina

woman who lived across the alley almost burned the house down and had to sell it, our

neighbors who are White bought it, and are rehabbing to rent it… Once you go 10 blocks

away, I'm sure there is a lot of diversity, but we aren't oriented in that direction.

Jess and Ray both describe how segregation plays itself out within the context of diverse

neighborhoods. The newer businesses these White middle-class families choose to patronize are

perhaps catering towards them and furthering the gentrification process.

Leanne described her neighborhood this way:

It's not as diverse now as it was then. As my husband puts it, the bohemians, the hippies,

the shock troops of gentrification. You come in and you make it safer for other people to

come in behind you with more money, and in this culture it's usually Whites. So the

neighborhood is still much more diverse than most but I'm aware of that.

Leanne and her husband identify as the bohemians who were some of the first Whites to enter

their neighborhood of Color 18 years ago. Three participants also specifically mentioned the

area code they lived in (the same one which is know to be very diverse but gentrifying) and two of them stated: "You know it's the most diverse zip code in the country right?" This was true based on previous census data, but when pointed out in this manner it felt as if the parents considered it a badge of honor to live in this neighborhood.

It may be that White middle class couples are moving to that zip code (rather than neighboring ones that may also be diverse or for the specific distinction of being in this "most" diverse neighborhood. However their presence has changed the very nature of the neighborhood that once distinguished it as many Black-owned businesses are being driven out. This data indicates that there is a trend for White liberals to seek out these neighborhoods and co-opt them rather than integrate themselves into the community and patronize businesses owned by people of Color.

Changes in public school assignments.

Another theme that was widely and spontaneously discussed among participants were recent changes in the manner in which youth are assigned to the city public schools. Previously, there was a city-wide busing policy in which children were bussed from different neighborhoods in order to diversify the schools and thus bring the resources of wealthier parents to schools in poor neighborhoods and reduce economic and educational disparities that tend to fall along racial lines. This policy was challenged and ended, and this coming year school assignments will be made based on proximity to the school, and the busing program will stop. Here are some of the comments White parents made about the change in school assignment policy:

Rhiannon: I didn't realize how much parents get wacked-out about schools… it really kind of has brought home to me last year when the neighborhood assignment plans were published by the school district, and um, their focus was on neighborhood schools. So a

lot of the *White* folks, (laughs) I say that kinda loosely, but really it's White folks; were freaking out, and like, "Oh my gosh, my kid's not going to go to (names two local racially diverse and under-resourced public schools) middle school or high school" and I was freaking out too, because, since I was in high school 30 years ago, that high school was never a good school. So, I, again, I don't know if that's a race thing or just it's never had a good reputation as a school.

Ruth: One of the reasons I worked so hard for (middle school that closed) was that it was a neighborhood school, because nobody picked it right? We picked it, because it had that wonderful Montessori teacher, but most people are going there because it's their nearest school. When it's a neighborhood school you get lots of parent involvement... So I see this really important benefit for neighborhood schools, and it leads to this crappy situation of under-resourced schools. The disparity in this city's schools is atrocious! Inexcusable and yet it just seems to be this systemic slogging problem that never gets solved and it's so sad. So at the same time we have this rich public school district where I really want my kids to be, they've got better special-ed services, better racial diversity experiences, way better music programs... at the same time, there's this profound systemic disparity between privilege and not-privilege it's just a shame.

Miranda discusses how she got her information about neighborhood schools in her area from a "mom's web-group" for mothers in a mostly white upper-class neighborhood of the city. Miranda lives on the edge of the upper class White neighborhood but the neighborhood school is in a diverse working-class area nearby:

There was a lot of discussion about the school systems, so I got this idea that this school that's in walking distance from my house was this awful school. And then I found out that it's not… I found the comments from that site have been really spiteful about other schools. That like when they're re-drawing all these boundaries all of a sudden there is all this discussion like, "Well who is gonna wanna go there, it encompasses all these apartments, you know all these rentals in it!" So that means…I don't know what. The families are going to be awful people that don't care about their kids, and their kids are going to be stupid? I don't know! It's really weird. They don't come out and say what they mean.

Miranda is aware of the classism and coded racism in the web group's dialogue, however, she herself chose an alternative co-op school, stating, "I would have been perfectly happy with our kids going there (to the public school) it's just that we happened to fall in love with this alternative school that's I'd been hearing about for years too." Although she discovered after touring the neighborhood school that it was "perfectly fine" and she would have been "perfectly happy" sending her kids there, she chose not to do so.

Parents with teenage to young-adult children.

Three parents with children between 14-18 years old reflected on their perceptions of how their child had been impacted by their attempts at integrating anti-racism into their lives. As the majority of respondent had younger children, these three parents offered an insight into the potential outcome of intentionally parenting White children with anti-racism values. Stephanie, who has a daughter in 8th grade, stated:

What I'm noticing now is that she's 14 is that what she chooses to do for her analysis of history or social studies, is it has that analysis of White privilege, and she says "White privilege" in her papers… And she speaks up a lot. She does that. That's an introvert, but she'll speak up one-on-one, and teachers will deny it, the other kids will tell her that she's too sensitive… she has this language and she understands White privilege… she did a lot of analysis on this history text, about how there wasn't any analysis of White privilege in it, and then she said the most important thing that she could see as a young woman, that she wants to address is education for young women of Color, that women of Color are so discriminated against that she would like to see more educational opportunities for them. So ok, that's a good thing for a 14-year-old.

Maria shared this about her 17 year-old son Carson:

He said that the most important thing was that I just talked about it (race) like it was a normal thing to talk about and he said that it was from the get go. That he can't remember a time when race was not a conversation that was really you know, open, and talked about like it was an important thing.

She also reflected back on an incident at the mall when her son was 12-years old. He and a friend prank-called 911 from the mall pay phones and were stopped by the mall security guards.

They said something like, "You're trespassed, you can't come back here" but there wasn't any paperwork or anything... It was interesting because my son Carson, after the fact we dropped Andre off at his house, and Carson said, "I don't think that would've happened if Andre wasn't Black." Even at that age, where he could see, like if this was at (mall in White area) and these were just White kids, would there have been that level of calling

the real cops, and would they have been trespassing kids? So I loved the fact that when he was 12 he had that sort-of ability to see the disconnects.

Laura shared this about her 18 year-old daughter:

I'm really happy to say that she's really absorbed and integrated this analysis and these values. She really gets it now, and gets it on a pretty deep level, which I'm really appreciative of… So now thinking about colleges, she's looking at the diversity or lack thereof in various schools… she's isn't so enamored with the very White privileged people, and kind of seems to not buy into their way of thinking of themselves or acting very privileged in the world. So she seems to be choosing friend that aren't that way. She also talks about it, and expresses her objections to how the advanced placement program plays out at her school, and how unfair it is to other kids and especially kids of Color. She shares her thinking so I can hear it.

The responses of these parents are significant because they give insight into the potential impact of raising White children with anti-racism values. All of the examples above demonstrate that that these young people are using an anti-racism lens to understand their environment, and on several occasions, this lens led them to speak up or act on what they noticed. These responses are promising as they indicate White children who are raised with anti-racism values may be more likely to act and promote racial equity within their sphere of influence.

How have issues of race or racism impacted your child's life?

The parents' interpretation of this question varied. Seven out of 20 identified White privilege and that being White would grant their children unearned advantages in U.S. society. Most of them did not go into depth about the privileges their children would receive. Three

(15%) mentioned the negative impact of racism on White children in terms of internalized superiority or entitlement, the rest (20%) simply acknowledged their children did have privilege. (10%) Two of the aforementioned parents acknowledged the internalized superiority their children would get as a result of being socialized in a racist society also named their own racism and how it's factored into their choices as a negative impact on their children.

Six out of 20 (30%) stated that they felt race or racism had not impacted their child much, or not yet, because the child was too young, 3 (15%) stated they were not sure how it impacted their child, and 1 (5%) parent stated race and racism had no impact on her child at all. Six (30%) stated that race or racism impacted their child in terms of their relationships or lack thereof with people of Color due to segregation. Five (20%) described adverse experiences their child had with children of Color that did not seem to be race-based, but were still cited as instances in which their child was impacted by race or racism. Two (10%) described a negative experience their child had based on being White, such as being called a honky or not being picked first for school events.

It is likely that these parents are cognizant of race when people of Color are present but may not have been if the incident they described had involved exclusively White children. Further, their assertions that these incidents were adverse racial experiences indicates that their families do not have many interactions with people of Color. One parent (5%) stated that her teenage daughter's anti-racism values had distanced her from the other White kids her age, and caused problems in some of her friendships with them. Two (10%) mentioned their children bearing witness to their friends of Color experiencing racism as an impact, and another stated that overt racism being taught to her daughter was a negative way in which racism affects her.

Two (10%) parents made statements about interconnectedness and racism and oppression affecting *all* people negatively.

The most prevalent theme these parents mentioned when asked how their children were impacted by racism was that they have White privilege. The second most prevalent theme was that parents felt their children had not been affected by racism "much or at all." This is noteworthy considering the respondents here identified themselves as anti-racist and anti-racism for Whites involves an understanding of the material and psychological advantages granted by Whiteness. These White children are born into many advantages, but these findings show that even Whites who identify with anti-racism have trouble recognizing racism and the depth of it's impact on their lives as White people.

Also, the fact that many parents also commented that their child had a negative experience with a person of Color, or that their child had been targeted for being White is telling. Many of these participants, if they thought their child was impacted by racism, tended to think of their children as *victims* rather than as beneficiaries. Some of the parents who mentioned White privilege also wondered out loud if their child had ever had an adverse experience based on being White. Several did mention that their children did not have many relationships with people of Color, or that their relationships were impacted, but often this was still framed in terms of the lack of relationships being a loss for the White child.

The following are examples of different types of responses the parents gave about how their White children were impacted by race or racism. Willa's comments:

> Not very much yet. And I say yet because I'm sure they will later. Now I think my son has noticed that the older Black kids seem to pair off, and it seems like the kids that pick on him. Because he's told me some kids call him baby because he's a little bitty guy.

And I afraid that the kids that are picking on him are older Black kids. And I hope that that doesn't come to affect him thinking that older Black kids, or Black kids are mean... I'm trying to make them aware of "we're all different, and that's ok."

Willa notes that the Black students pair off but doesn't comment on the friendships of the White children in her son's class who are likely doing the same. She hopes her son will not stereotype Black children as "mean" indicating he likely does not have relationships with many Black people.

Miranda's response:

I'd like to say I hope they haven't, just 'cause I don't think it's ever come up. And they've never ask- I mean...I don't feel like it's ever made any impact. Um, I think that I feel like things might change more when there are more play dates and true friendships, and they also haven't had situations too much where they have been hurt by someone...I really love that she hasn't asked about difference and that she just takes it in stride.

Miranda takes a colorblind stance and can't identify how race impacts her children. She imagines how race may impact them in the future but alludes to them potentially being hurt by someone or excluded as they gain more friendships. Throughout Miranda's interview she contradicted her self, claiming anti-racism values and yet disclosing negative race and class stereotypes throughout the discussion. In contrast, Nora said this about her young White boys:

They can do anything, the world is theirs, they have no limits. As a parent that's wonderful, and you want that for all kids, um, it would be easier for me to talk about with girls because they get shunned a lot and told "no you can't do this" but Boys there is

nothing that they're shunned, they get to do anything they want to do… I want them to

recognize their entitlement and not go with it.

Nora is clear that her White boys' lives will be shaped by their gender and race privilege. She

wants them to understand their privilege rather than take advantage of it and strategized about

what she could do to teach them anti-oppression values as they age. Ruth's answer was less

direct but like Miranda's also contradictory:

Well, they're definitely more aware of the ways in which they are impacted by anti-

Semitism, so better than kids their age I think they're able to see it as a systemic issue.

Not my younger son very much. He's much more impacted by ableism… I think how

he's impacted by it is he doesn't have the cultural fluency to understand the culture and

the enjoyable rivalries that can go on in the street savvy Black kids at his school.

Early in the interview Ruth discussed the importance of not focusing on targeted aspects of

identity in anti-oppression work. But when asked about how race and racism impact her White

boys she mentioned their privilege but focused more on the ways in which aspects of their

identity are targeted. While she briefly mentions that because they face oppression in other

categories they can better understand racism, she then switches to stating her son has trouble

relating to the Black kids at his school. She uses the racial stereotype "street savvy" to describe

these children.

Stephanie focused on privilege exclusively:

Well, every day, their privilege gets stronger every day. I've chosen to live in a White

neighborhood, I've chosen all these choices as a White privileged person that continue to

be racist, in my decision making… and we need to work on our racism, to kind of chip

away- even though we can't ever- it's just who we are.

Stephanie was one of very few parents who discussed an understanding of how her own racism

and biases impact her children and she was also the only parent who said she felt White privilege

and racism was increasing rather than decreasing in U.S. society. She is doubtful Whites will

ever stop being racist, but continues to teach her daughters to speak-up, and models anti-racism

in her work.

How aware of race and racism do you think your child is?

Seven parents (35%) stated that their child was "only a little" or "not very" aware of race

and racism. Nine parents specified that their child was aware of cultural and/or racial difference,

but not racism. Two parents (10%) stated their child was not aware of race or racism at all. One

parent stated their child was "aware" and 5 parents (25%) all of whom had children ages 10 and

above, stated that their children were "very aware" of race and racism. One (5%) stated that they

were not sure whether or not their child was aware, but that their children hear them talking

about racism and anti-racism with their partner or other people in their lives. Parents of younger

children tended to be pleased their children were not aware of race and racism, several stating

that they "were very happy" or "loved it." Lila said this about her 3-year-old daughter:

Right now most of this is just floating over her head, and I don't know how much to

really draw attention to it yet. I like the fact that she is still not- it's not a thing to her, I

don't think she's even identifying people as being of different races and ethnicities, I

think she's just figuring, "Oh this person's my friend" I'm very happy about that.

It is true that a 3-year-old would not conceptualize racism with the complexity that an older child or adult would. However, research has shown that children as young as 2 recognize difference and begin to make meaning of those difference based on what they experience in their environment.

Miranda gave this answer about her 4 and 6 year-old daughters:

I'd probably say they're not aware of it at all.   That's either a really great thing or a really awful thing. Maybe it's because our neighborhood's pretty White, but then again the Fred Meyer we shop at's not, and the library we go to's not, or the bank you know, and all that stuff. I guess that her classroom basically is White, for all intensive purposes, without her knowing, actually that's not true there's, there is a bunch of inter-racial couples and some kids look more….it's mostly Asian, but some kids look more Asian than others, and you know, she's never once said, you know" Why does Andrew's dad look that way?" and mom, you know, I love that she's never talked about it, and we haven't talked about you know, that, I feel like it's this deep secret about our culture that I just don't want to let go… I don't want to tell her how evil and bad people can be like to judge based on you know, X, Y, or Z thing.

Miranda, like many parents, has the false idea that if she does not talk about racism, her children will not notice it. Of course as a White family, Miranda can choose to ignore racism but this does not change the fact that her children (as all children in the U.S.) have been deeply impacted by it. They will have to make sense of where the people in the store live and why they don't live in their neighborhood or go their school. Based on the literature, at age 6 her daughter does notice difference, and has likely already learned that it is taboo to talk about the differences

especially racial. Miranda even acknowledges that "it" (presumably racism) is a "deep secret about our (White) culture that she does not want her daughter to know about. Miranda's comments exemplify Patricia William's (1998) statement that White's colorblindness is a "purity achieved through ignorance."

Also of note, three of the 5 parents who responded that their children were "very aware" of racism, also spontaneously voiced concern that they might drive their White children away from anti-racism values by "shoving them down the child's throat." These parents were trying to address racism with their children without lecturing them or creating an aversion to discussing the issue. One of the 5 parents who described their child as "very aware" of race and racism, stated not only that her child was very aware, but that she was actively seeking out more information and basing life choices such as where to go to college, on her anti-racism values. Another stated that her child brought up racism and White privilege at school with her classmates and teachers. In the follow examples you can see the range of responses about awareness. Jess said this:

> They are pretty aware of race, as most children often are… I mean for the most part they're surrounded by liberal White people who, you know would consider themselves not racist, but are not necessarily anti-racist and so, they aren't having the conversations with them that I am having… They are not very aware of racism at this point, you know I am one of the few people in their lives that brings it up.

Jess states that her children are aware of race, but not racism. However according to the literature based on their age they are aware of it.

Ruth's comment:

For their age, very, in general of where I think White people should be, not very because it's a slow learning process.

Laura's comments on her daughter's awareness:

I think she's very aware of it, really aware of it. She's open to learning to more and always learning more about it… when she was in 4th grade, she made this newspaper, just on her own, called the Times, and she had some articles in there about racism, so yeah, she was already thinking about it and articulating it then, but really it wasn't until she was in high school that I feel like she really was able to embody it and feel it more and really get it. I feel like she's really using the analysis now, she can articulate that.

Both Ruth and Laura state their children are very aware, however Ruth didn't give any examples of how her son's demonstrate their awareness. Laura gives an example of her daughter taking anti-racist action in her 4th grade class. Laura's answer is encouraging and indicates her anti-racist parenting may be effective.

What types of implicit and explicit messages about race do you think your child takes in?

Participants were asked their impressions of what implicit and explicit messages about race their children take in. They gave a wide range of answers and many were uncertain which messages their children did or did not internalize. All participants acknowledged that their children took in messages about race, but most were unsure what those messages were, and under estimated their powerful influence. Many did not differentiate between implicit or explicit messaging. Their responses fell into the following categories:

7 parents (35%) stated that their child got positive messages about the value of diversity and/or equality.

6 parents (30%) referenced their children seeing people of Color in poverty or using drugs in their community as a racial message or potential message.

6 parents (30%) commented on their own socialization by stating that their child picked up on implicit racism or bias from them.

6 parents (30%) discussed different forms of media such as television programs, billboards, music, and video games.

5 parents (25%) mentioned that their children would see that Whites are "in charge" or hold most of the positions of power and authority in U.S. society.

4 parents (20%) mentioned messages from dolls and toys.

4 parents (20%) commented that their child was exposed to bias against African Americans specifically through other family members or the media.

3 parents (15%) mentioned either the lack of Black youth present in their child's school and segregation within the school system as a message.

2 parents (10%) stated their child got explicit anti-racism messages from them.

2 parents (10%) stated book were a source of cultural messaging.

2 parents (10%) talked about how seeing people of Color in positions of power and influence was an important implicit message and cited Obama's presidency.

This is what Nora had to say:

The fact that my kids, in their whole life only see the president as a Black man is huge…

They *love* Obama… there is not a question in their mind that a Black man can be

president and that you can look to this person as the leader of our country… nothing

different than that, that's fantastic, I'm so glad that that's where I'm starting with them,

because that alone will challenge any kind of superiority that they might have just having the benefits of being a White boy.

Leanne talked about the subliminal messaging about race her sons receive from toys:

It's all about stealing it's not cool, and so, it's sort of like the playmobil version of history. Do you know what playmobils are? They're *evil.* So they have all these different sets, in all these historical contexts, and a lot of them are about these pretty ugly parts, it's mostly about Western Europeans interactions with other cultures… we won't let him get some of the themes, like ancient *Rome* where people were quite horrible to one another, but all the little playmobils have smiles! That's why I think they're evil. An so he learns about slavery, in a context like that, it's not fun, it's real, and it's the legacy of millions and millions of Americans.

Leanne demonstrates her understanding of the implicit messaging her son takes in from his environment, and how it desensitizes him to violence and domination with it's "playmobil version of history." However, like Shayla, who also commented specifically about the colonial theme of playmobil, she still purchases them for her son.

Women of Color and early childcare.

Several participants brought up having a childcare worker in their home, or noted racism in the behavior of other White parents choices for childcare and early childhood education. One mother simply noted that she had a "mother's helper" from Mexico for one year to teach her child Spanish, another that she had a nanny, but did not mention the person's racial identity. Another, Jane, who described the powerful positive image she believes her son has internalized about Obama above, wonder about the impact of having an au pair who is a woman of Color:

Our recent au pair she was from Brazil…and so she would teach the boys Portuguese,

and Japanese…this is just me questioning decisions I make… they really saw her as a

family member… on the other hand I don't want them to see, she did a lot of work

around the house, she helped out a lot, and I didn't want them to think like, you know,

"We're all White, and this Asian girl, is our you know like, I can tell her what to do and

she does our laundry" I didn't want them to define race that way. And they probably

didn't, but um, I made sure she wasn't the only one doing the laundry, we all had a lot of

work to do around the house.

Jane and her family likely treated the au pair with respect and kindness; she was aware that her

sons would be watching and states she does not want to create a superiority complex. However,

by her own logic, if her son's internalize a positive message about racial equity from Obama,

would they not also internalize a message about gender and race, with a women of Color in a

subservient role in their home? Also note how Jane seems to almost name the role of this au pair

then changes midsentence to describe her activities. It's possible she was psychologically

distancing herself from the power differential and thus avoided using the term "maid" or

"servant."

Another participant, Rachelle, describes her observations of the White parents in her

son's school program:

We chose a daycare center that was run by a non-profit for refugee women. And as,

when we choose it, a lot of other White parents were choosing it for infant and toddler

care, and they have very good ratios, which a lot of places don't have, and they had

openings, because they were going through a transition and expanding, and I remember at

the time having chosen it partly based on they had openings and good ratios, but it also

was a place where I felt like my kid would be surrounded in part by kids of Color, and I

was trying as much as possible to have that be normal, as opposed to an anomaly. What

was weird is that about half his class was White kids, and as the kids moved up, beyond

the toddler program to the preschool, all except two other White families moved their

kids to different preschools. And it was surprising to me at the time, because I had made

certain assumptions that the other White families who were there where there out of their

own anti-racist values, and I'm still trying to make sense of what was really going on, but

I have the sense that, for many of the other White folks, that taking care of a baby, or

taking care of a toddler, they saw it as a perfectly appropriate role for women of Color,

you know who had maybe some limited English backgrounds, who spoke with strong

accents, who were struggling with the language. But the point at which they saw their

kids as needing to be *learning* and needing to be in an academic environment, which, you

know, whatever we can go off about that and middle class parents wanting like 3-year-

olds to get academics, but it was at the moment when there were both other options, *many*

preschool options, and this sense, and a couple parents said like, "Well I want to make

sure my kid speaks English properly" and "Well you know, they won't get the right kind

of preparation for kindergarten and things." And it was, even you know, with all the

work I've done, it was one of those stunning moments for me.

Rachelle's disturbing observation is that the other White parents' perspective on appropriate

roles for women of Color is remarkably similar to what one would find during slavery when

Black served as wet nurses and took care of children in many White families. Their reasons for

changing schools are coded but the underlying belief may be grounded in racist ideas that women of Color are qualified to care for but not teach their children.

How diverse was your neighborhood growing up?

All parents were asked about the diversity of their neighborhood growing up. A significant majority described growing up in mostly or entirely White surroundings. Ten (50%) stated they grew up in "all White" or "almost all White" neighborhoods, and an additional 6 (30%) described their neighborhood as "predominantly White." Two (10%) described their neighborhood as "diverse" and 2 (10%) gave multiple responses because they moved or the demographics of the neighborhood changed. Those 2 responses included "predominantly White/Latino" and "predominantly Hispanic/diverse." A total of 15 of 20 participants (75%) grew up in predominantly White environments across the country.

What was the racial make-up of your friendship circle?

All parents were asked about the racial breakdown of their childhood friendship circles. Nine (45%) stated their friendship circle was "predominantly" White, and 5 (25%) stated it was "all White." Two (10%) described their friendship circle as "diverse," 1 (5%) stated her friends were "predominantly Latina," and 3 (15%) gave multiple responses because they moved or how they described their friends change as they got older. Those responses included 1 "diverse/all White," and 2 "all White/diverse." In total, including those who gave multiple responses, 17 of the 20 participants (85%) had "all or predominantly White" friendship circles for at least part of their childhood. Five of 20 (25%) stated that their friendship circle was "diverse" for all or part of their childhood, and 1 of 20 (5%) stated her friendship circle was predominately of Color and all Latina.

How racially diverse is your child's school?

All parents were asked about the racial make up of their child's school and described it in the following ways:

9 (45%) as "diverse."

4 (20%) as "predominantly White" or "mostly White."

1 (5%) as "predominantly Asian."

1 (5%) as "predominantly Black."

1 (5%) as "predominately of Color."

1 (5%) as "somewhat diverse."

In addition 3 gave multiple responses either because their child changed schools or they had children in different schools. Of the 3 who gave multiple answers they included:

1 (5%) "predominantly of Color/predominantly White"

1 (5%) "diverse/somewhat diverse,"

1 (5%) "predominantly Black/predominantly White."

 Some parents gave percentages of the racial breakdown in their child's school.   As previously discussed, many themes around tracking and school program type emerged in the participants' dialogues.

How racially diverse is your child's neighborhood now?

Participants were asked about the diversity of their child's current neighborhood. Eleven participants (55%) stated that they lived in a "diverse" neighborhood, but the majority of these, 7 of 11 (35%) stated their neighborhood was gentrifying. Six participants (30%) stated they lived in an "all or predominantly White" neighborhood, 2 of those stated their White neighborhood used to be of Color and was gentrified. One (5%) respondent gave multiple responses, stating that their child had lived in two neighborhoods, one "diverse" and one "all White." These results

show the shift from the parents' report of the diversity of their neighborhood growing up to their current neighborhood. While 15 of the parents (75%) grew up in predominantly White environments, 6 (30%) stated their child's current neighborhood was all or predominantly White.

What is the racial make-up of your child's friendship circle?

All parents were asked about the racial make-up of their child's friendship circle. They were asked specifically about racial make-up rather than diversity in order to elicit more detailed answers. The parents tended to describe their child's friendship circle as less diverse than their neighborhood or school. Nine participants (45%) described their child's friendship circle as "predominantly White," and 6 (30%) described their child's friendship circle as "diverse" or named their child's playmates and their racial and ethnic background. One parent (5%) described their child's friendship circle as "predominantly Asian," 1 (5%) as "almost all White," and 1 as "somewhat diverse." Two parents (10%) gave multiple responses, either because it changed or it differed from child to child if they had more than one. Of these 2 parents, one stated her child's friendship circle was "predominately White/diverse" and the other "all Asian/predominantly White."

Note that in only 2 (10%) of cases the parents describe their child's friendship circle as predominantly or all children of Color, and in both of these cases they children's friends are Asian. No primarily Black or Latino friendship circles are mentioned. While this trend is partially accounted for by the racial demographics of the county in which theses families live, overall the demographics of the friendship circles do not match the diversity of the child's school or the neighborhood. White children still tended to have more White friends than friends of Color. Several parents also commented under the question about what implicit messages their child might take in about race, that their current social circle is also predominantly White.

Comparing the parents' report of the racial make-up of their friendship circles growing up with that of their children, a shift was noted but less than that of the neighborhood. A total of 14 of the parents (70%) stated their friendship circle was "predominantly White" or "almost all White," during their childhood, and 11 respondents (55%) stated that their child's friendship circle was "predominantly White" or "almost all White." The percentage of predominantly White friendship circles dropped from one generation to the next, and the percentage of diverse or predominantly of Color friendship circles for these White children grew. Six of the parents (30%) including those who gave multiple responses, described their childhood friendship circle as "diverse" or "all Latina" whereas 9 (45%) parents (45%) including those with multiple responses, stated that their child's friendship circle was either "diverse" "somewhat diverse" "predominantly Asian" or "all Asian." Note that in neither the parents' or the children's description does any White parent interviewed mention a predominantly Black friendship circle.

Conclusion

Many themes and trends emerged in the findings of this study. These themes and trends shed light on how White parents conceptualized anti-racism and how their practices and perspectives align (or not) with the anti-racism literature and research on child development. These findings give insight into the White anti-racism movement and suggest continued directions for research and furthering anti-racism work.

Chapter V

Discussion

As outlined in the previous chapter, many themes emerged in the dialogues. The themes I see as most significant to discuss in further depth are: inconsistencies between anti-racism

values and practice: patterns in neighborhood and school choices and: denial of their child's racial awareness among others.

Inconsistencies Between Anti-racism Values and Practice

At this juncture, with a few exceptions, the main difference between anti-racist White parents, and average White parents could be distilled down to an *awareness* of Whiteness, White privilege, and racism. White Americans as a whole tend to have very little awareness of their own race, and don't' see racism as a serious social problem. The intentions of the majority of the parents I interviewed were good: 19 of 20 (95%) are addressing racism and promoting anti-racism in *some* way. Compared to average White Americans, these parents are taking many intentional actions to instill racial equity values in their children. There were many ways in which these parents who identified with these values socialized their child differently than mainstream White parents, particularly around recognizing and naming difference. However, the impact of their anti-racism efforts is often overestimated as the vast majority rely solely on interrupting racism at an individual or interpersonal level.

Based on their reports of their own childhood experiences in neighborhoods and schools there is some evidence to suggest their White children will have more and better relationships with children of Color than their parents did. It follows that in combination with being taught an anti-racism framework will likely influence their behavior in some way that furthers the pursuit of anti-racism. However, this "trickle down" effect of anti-racism (i.e. if we teach White kids to be open minded racism will eventually end) will do too little and take fart too long to change the outcomes for people of Color in the U.S. Too few White parents who say they are anti-racist are challenging the *system* overall, and if systemic change does not occur, racism will not be ameliorated and racial equity will not be achieved. Only a few parents demonstrated a deep

understanding of how embedded racism is in the structure of U.S. society. Perhaps the most disturbing finding, is that hardly any of those with a sophisticated understanding of these dynamics took action against them. Stephanie, as one such parent wondered, "What could we do, if we really applied ourselves as White people? …How hard is that to do?"

There were many examples of the White parents I talked to engaging in anti-racism activism, mostly in their child's school. Some had worked to fight the closure of the under-resourced neighborhood school their children attended. Others worked with parents of Color within the school to organize parents groups to push for racial equity within their schools. Many described reaching out to parents of Color to try and create relationships across racial and class lines. All of these activities are the self-report of White parents – how the parents of Color they interacted with felt about their efforts is unknown. In some cases it appears their efforts were effective, in some cases dubious. Overall, only one (5%) of the parents I spoke with gave *no* indication they understood, or engaged in anti-racism. The other 19 were engaged –to varying degrees- and making trying to teach their White children about racism and hoping for them to become anti-racist adults. Encouragingly, those who had teenage or adult children reported they evidenced anti-racism values in their lives.

However, my research shows that White parents who identify with anti-racism values are almost universally contradicting their value system in some ways, and adhering to it in others. They take advantage of their privilege to ensure that their children live in the neighborhood they want and get the education that they want them to have. As stated in Johnson & Shapiro (2003):

> While this is partially attitudinal, it is also the consequence of a racially stratified and segregated structure within which individual families make decisions. Ultimately, no matter how conflicted they are, the end result is the same. White families choose to live

in, and are rewarded for living in, White neighborhoods… the social structure rewards White families for perpetuating segregation through their racialized decisions (pp. 182-183).

These parents choices happen within a highly inequitable context, and in this context, they have options their counterparts with less race and class privilege do not. On one hand, despite having race (and for the most part class and educational privilege as well) these parents are going against the grain. They generally teach their children about racism historically and current, they talk about White privilege, model activism for them in their school or their community, and in some cases model being allies to people of Color and are highly involved in racial justice movement work. On the other hand, they are also very comfortable in their privileged position, want to ensure it for their children, and are only willing to put so much energy into anti-racism work.

School and Neighborhood Choices

One of the most frequently discussed subject matters was school choice. The majority of these parents stated that they chose a school based on diversity. However, most also spontaneously discussed the racial make-up of their child's program within the school, and these programs, the across the spectrum tended to be Whiter and included many more middle-upper income families. The "school within a school" phenomenon is well known; honors programs are often completely different from mainstream school programs which are typically under resourced and taught by inexperienced teachers and amounting to de facto segregation.

This contradiction between the professed values of the White, politically liberal respondents and their behavior is consistent with aversive racism theory.   The majority of

parents consciously choose to live in diverse neighborhoods and send their children to diverse schools, and yet many also indicated majority White social circles and majority White school programs. Therefore, the outward appearance embraces diversity, but there is little action being taken to build authentic cross-racial relationships or address racial and economic disparity within the school or in the greater community.

The community a child lives in and the school they attend has a bearing on their future opportunities and prospects. Recognizing this, White parents and school and neighborhood choice has been the subject of recent discussion among racism and Whiteness scholars. Johnson & Shapiro's (2003) study, *Good Neighborhoods, Good Schools: Race and the "Good Choices" of White Families* explicitly addresses this phenomenon. As Johnson & Shapiro note, there are only so many "good" schools and neighborhoods to go around and not everyone will have access to them. The authors contend that these individual choices are embedded in a system of socioeconomic and education inequality and that understanding the process of how these choices are made is important as it pertains to how racism and classism are perpetuated.

Johnson & Shapiro's data showed that White parents decisions were often based on race, and served to secure education and economic advantage for their children. It is important to note that this was a random sampling of White parents, not identified specifically with anti-racism. These average Whites were shown to take racialized actions in their school and neighborhood choice. How did they compare to the White parents in my study who self-identified as anti-racist? In Johnson and Shapiro's study, most White parents identified school district as the main reason for their neighborhood choice. According to Johnson and Shapiro:

These families are trying to make "good choices" for their families, but what do these

phrases –"good neighborhoods" and "good schools"- mean to them? Inevitably, in

explaining their thinking and decision making race became and integral part of parents' explanations. Interviews reveal that almost always, in the case of neighborhoods and schools, "good" is interwoven with ideas about race, and race is clearly a primary dimension of whites' choices. The specific kind of environment white parents want for their children (or do not want) and attempting to control that environment were integral dimensions of their school and community choices (p.176).

In my interviews, neighborhood schools were also a subject of conversation because the city's public school system had just made a shift; previously parents had two or more school choice options, but at the time of this writing, school assignment was based upon neighborhood. In the past, parents in the public school system had the ability to petition to get their child into the school of they wanted, but no longer had this choice. The parents I interviewed overall were unhappy with the shift because they had fewer options, and although most lived in diverse neighborhoods, they did not want to send their child to their neighborhood school. If they did, they were in the "better" program, which also happened to be whiter. One stated they would move to a different neighborhood to get their child access to the school they wanted; a luxury as most families do not have the resources to pick up and move at a moments notice. If the neighborhood schools are not good, why not organize with other families in the neighborhood to advocate for improvements in the school? That action would be more consistent with anti-racism values than moving to a different neighborhood and might potentially take less effort.

In terms of neighborhood choice, the anti-racist White parents I interviewed differed from Johnson & Shapiro's study in that they were pro-diversity and chose to live in neighborhoods with people of Color. For many, this was stated as the main way they

incorporated anti-racism values into their parenting. Still, there weren't any that reported that their neighborhood was predominantly of Color: most were in diverse neighborhoods that were gentrifying. A few reported living in their neighborhood for 15-20 years, and that at the time they moved in it was predominantly of Color. Many of the families in Johnson & Shapiro's interviews spoke in overtly racist terms that they specifically avoided neighborhoods that were predominantly people of Color, and were distressed if people of Color -particularly Blacks- were moving into their neighborhood. They stated that "safe" schools were found in White neighborhood and they were seeking to get away from "bad elements" and "negative influences," which in their minds tend to be representative of more racially diverse –but particularly Black-communities" (p.180).

In contrast the parents in my study ideally wanted a school that was both diverse, and "good." However, the "quality" of the program trumped diversity almost exclusively –and quality was consistently associated with race. There were a few rare examples in which the parents in my study identified school environments that were predominantly children of Color to be high or higher quality than the Whiter programs, but overall parents expressed concern that their White child would have a negative experience, and/or lose their academic edge in a "traditional" (aka non-Montessori, non honors) and less White environment. One mother in the Johnson & Shapiro study describes her pride in sending her child to an inner-city "magnet" public school similar to the choice of many of the parents I spoke with, who sent their children to diverse schools with good "reputations." However, she expresses the sentiment that she feels she cannot put her child "at risk" to be part of the solution and describes having her child enrolled in public school as a "sacrifice" (p.184). The parents interviewed here also expressed this sentiment.

McGrath & Kuriloff's (1999) study on race and economic class highlights concerns about certain types of parental involvement; namely that the agenda of involved parents are usually self-serving and aimed at gaining advantage for their own children. Thus instead of improving educational opportunities for all families, soliciting involvement of these parents may focus school administrators' attention on those who already have disproportionately high access (McGrath & Kuriloff, 1999). The majority of parents in McGrath & Kuriloff's study were White middle to upper middle class women. These women actually *resisted attempts* to discontinue tracking in their school and excluded parents of Color and lower class status from the decision making process.

Many of the White parents I spoke with who also felt that enrolling their child in the regular public school program would be to their detriment. Anti-Black tendencies also emerged within the dialogues adverse experiences their children had with race, they usually involved a Black child. For parents who had their children in an immersion program, it was Chinese, and those with adopted siblings were of Asian decent. In this way the anti-racist White families behaved similarly to the White families in Johnson & Shapiro's study. As Johnson and Shapiro contend, the cycle continues and most Whites do not challenge systemic inequities such as district funding patterns.

Denial of Child's Racial Awareness

The trend in research over the past two decades indicates children are vastly more sophisticated thinkers than most Americans want to believe. The parents interviewed here supported this problematic line of thinking. A significant number of parents reported they do not believe that their children notice difference, or that if they do notice, they have not yet assigned value to it. At the same time, parents report that their children *have* noticed racial differences

and *have* assigned value to it. This contradiction, compounded with a lack of awareness of children as capable of making racialized meaning, poses significant challenges to authentic anti-racist parenting. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness is also compounded by the ways in which school curriculum may reinforce colorblind racism.

The recent indications that colorblind and equality focused programs might reinforce racism (and other biases) rather than challenge them are disturbing, as these approaches have grown tremendously and seem to represent the majority of the "anti-racist" approach to parenting and early childhood educations. Anderson & Hill Collins (2010) cite problems with multiculturalism and the "difference framework," stating that the language of difference encourages comparative thinking in which one contrast their experiences with others. They posit:

> Comparative thinking can foster greater understanding and tolerance, but comparative thinking alone can also leave intact the power relations that create race, class, and gender relations. Because the concept of difference contains the unspoken question, "different from what?" this framework can privilege those who are deemed to be "normal" and stigmatize people who are labeled as "different." (pp. 8-9).

Additionally, the authors state that at the same time diversity is recognized, groups are perceived through the dominant group value, still considered "other" and treated in exclusionary ways. The vast majority of the parents I interviewed spoke with pride about the multi-culturalism of their child's school program, and stated that diversity was important and to be celebrated. However, it seems many of these school programs present diversity as a plurality of views and traditions without addressing the fact that structural opportunities are denied some

groups and provided to others. Recognizing and analyzing hierarchies and structural systems of power and inequality are imperative if we want our children to have an anti-racist education. Otherwise, "understanding diversity becomes just one more privilege for those with the greatest access to education" (Anderson & Hill Collins, 2010, p.11).

Children as young as 3 years old see difference, form complex understandings of identity, and start "doing race." This new thinking about child development needs to be disseminated in order to debunk the myth of a childhood preracial innocence. Children are born into the racial matrix of U.S. society, which as previously noted is a large determinant as to what the educational, health, and income outcomes in their life will be. More research is needed to analyze the effectiveness of anti-bias and anti-racist educational programs. If the colorblind approach or multi-culturalist approach is ineffective, new programs, likely those addressing systemic inequities and domination need to be put into practice at all levels of education.

Conclusion

The suggestive significance of this study is that there is much work to be done within the White anti-racism movement to educate its members about their collusion in racist systems. Those of us within the movement must first identify how our housing, school choices, (including school program choices) and colorblind ideology enable racism to continue. According to the large and growing body of anti-racism literature, awareness and discussion of racism and interruption at an inter-personal level is not sufficient, political action is necessary. As a White woman who considers herself aligned with anti-racism values and strives to act in accordance with them, I challenge Whites to refocus anti-racism efforts towards the systemic inequalities that perpetuate disproportionate educational, health and economic outcomes for people of Color in U.S. society. If this step is not taken Whites cannot lay claim to an anti-racist identity.

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Appendix A

HSR Approval Letter

December 20, 2010

Sarah Matlock

Dear Sarah,
Your second set of revisions has been reviewed and they are fine. We are happy to give final approval to your very interesting study.

Please note the following requirements:
Consent Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.
In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:
Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.
Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.
Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.
Good luck with your project.

Sincerely,

Ann Hartman, D.S.W.
Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Robin DiAngelo, Research Advisor

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

My name is Sarah Matlock, an MSW student in the master's program at Smith College School for Social Work. I am conducting a qualitative research study on white parents (of white children) who identify as anti-racist. While the anti-racism field and whiteness studies have grown exponentially in the last decade, there has been little investigation into how white people who identify as anti-racists seek to impart these values to their children. I will be using the data obtained for my master's thesis and publication or presentation.

Your involvement will include participating in a 1-1.5 hour in person interview, which I will record using a digital audio recorder. During the interview I will ask questions about your anti-racism principles, your involvement in anti-racism work, and how these values come into play in your parenting. The inclusion criteria are that your primary racial identity is white, anti-racist, and that you have children who you also identify as white.

Possible risks include anxiety or discomfort that is often produced when white people talk about race and racism. Reflecting on the impact of these issues on you and your family may cause stress. A list of referrals for local mental health providers will be provided to you. Potential benefits to you are an opportunity to share your parenting values. It will be a chance to reflect on what has shaped your experience and how your children's experience may be similar and different from your own.

What is learned from this study will help disseminate what white people are doing to work against racism and where our blind spots may be. In addition a $30 gift card to Elliot Bay Book Company will be provided to you for your participation, whether or not you choose to answer questions during the interview.

The study will be confidential. I will know your identity as we will meet in person, however all identifiable information will be disguised and there will be no way for anyone other than myself to learn who you are or tie any data included in my thesis back to you. In the final product, both general trends found in the research and quotations will be used. What occurs during the interview will be reviewed with my thesis advisor, with your name removed. My

advisor is also bound by confidentiality guidelines. Any quotations or vignettes from our interview that are used will be carefully disguised. I will transcribe the recordings into word documents and all data including audiotapes, transcriptions, and notes from the interview will be kept locked in a secure location and electronic data will be protected. All original data will be destroyed in three years or when no longer needed.

Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at anytime during the data collection process. You may also withdraw after the data is collected before April 30th, 2010. You may refuse to answer questions. Materials pertaining to you will be destroyed should you decide to withdraw. My contact information is listed below should you decide to withdraw. If you have concerns about your rights or any aspect of the study, please contact the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subject Review Committee at phone number (413) 585-7974.

YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Participant signature _____Date_____.

Researcher signature_____ Date_____.

Please retain a copy of this form for your records.
Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sarah A. Matlock
BA Sociology/Social Work and Spanish
MSW (in progress)

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Demographic Questions:

1.) What is your age?
2.) How do you gender identify (female, male, other)?
3.) Religious background?
4.) Current religion?
5.) Economic class background growing up? (low income, middle income, high income)
6.) Current economic class? (low income, middle income, high income)
7.) Sexual orientation?
8.) Parenting status? (i.e. partnered, single)
9.) How many children do you have?
10.)What is your child/children's age?

Interview Questions:

1. What does anti-racism mean to you?
2. How did you come to identify as an anti-racist white person?
3. How racially diverse was your neighborhood growing up?
4. How racially diverse was your friendship circle?
5. What did your parents communicate to you about race when you were growing up?
6. Are there specific incidents involving race during your childhood that standout to you?
7. Were there specific experiences in childhood you think contributed to your becoming anti-racist?
8. How does being an anti-racist white person influence your parenting?
9. (If not answered in above question) Do you specifically incorporate anti-racism values into your parenting? If so how?
10. In your view, how have issues of race or racism impacted your child's life?
11. How aware of race and racism do you think your child is?
12. We take in both implicit (things implied) and explicit (things stated outright) messages in our culture. What types of implicit and explicit messaging about race do you think your child takes in?
13. Are there specific incidents involving race during your child's life that stand out to you?
14. How racially diverse is your child's neighborhood now?
15. How racially diverse is your child's school?
16. What is the racial make-up of your child's friendship circle?
17. What (if any) feelings have come up for you during this interview?
18. Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

Appendix D

Agency Recruitment Email

Date _____

Dear (<u>Potential Agency or Program Sight for Recruitment</u>)

I am a student in the MSW program at Smith College School for Social Work, and am currently looking for people in the Seattle area to participate research study. The study is looking at how anti-racist white parents incorporate their anti-racist values into their child-rearing. The study involves a 60-90 minute in person interview.

To quality, participants must:

1.) Identify their primary racial identity as white
2.) Identify as anti-racist
3.) Have at least one child over age 3 whose primary racial identity is also white

This is a great opportunity for individuals to share their experiences and contribute to anti-racism work. A $30 gift card to Elliot Bay Book Company will be given as a thank you for their participation. Please contact me by phone or email if you think there are potential participants I could contact through your program.

Thanks for your consideration!
Please forward this to anyone you think might be interested.

Sarah Matlock
MSW Student
Smith College School for Social Work

Appendix E

Individual Recruitment Email

Date _____

Dear (<u>Potential Individual Participant</u>)

I am a student in the MSW program at Smith College School for Social Work, and am currently looking for people in the Seattle area to participate research study. The study is looking at how anti-racist white parents incorporate their anti-racist values into their child-rearing. The study involves a 60-90 minute in person interview.

To quality, you must:

1.) Identify your primary racial identity as white
2.) Identify as anti-racist
3.) Have at least one child over age 3 whose primary racial identity is also white

This is a great opportunity to share your experiences and contribute to anti-racism work. A $30 gift card to Elliot Bay Book Company will be given as a thank you for your participation. Please contact me by phone or email to set up an interview.

Thanks for your consideration!
Please forward this to anyone you think might be interested.

Sarah Matlock
MSW Student
Smith College School for Social Work

Appendix F

Recruitment Flyer

Do you identify as a white anti–racist?
Are you also the parent of white children?

Contribute to anti-racism work!

Participate in a study about how white people who identify as anti-racist raise their children.

One 60-90 minute interview.

$30 Gift card to Elliot Bay Book Company provided for your participation.

Contact Sarah, MSW student at matlocks@uw.edu or