UNCOVERING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Nurturing Developing Minds
Conference and Research Symposium
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Today’s Agenda

1. The Manifestation of Unconscious Bias
2. How Bias Impacts Our Children
3. What We Can Do
We are constantly updating our unconscious bias research, work, and trainings.
The Manifestation of Unconscious Bias
Unconscious Bias = Implicit Bias

“…the automatic and unconscious stereotypes that drive people to behave and make decisions in certain ways.”

~Yale School of Medicine

“A bias is a departure from some point that has been marked as ‘neutral.’ Biases in implicit stereotypes and implicit attitudes are called ‘implicit biases.’”

~Implicit Bias: A Primer for Courts
Defining “Implicit”

We are either unaware of or mistaken about the source of the thought or feeling.

Implicit Bias is Known to Predict...

- The rate of callback interviews
- How we read friendliness of facial expressions
- More negative professional evaluations
- The amount of shooter bias

Callback Rates Explored

Black applicants without criminal record (14%) fare worse than white peers with a record (17%).

FIGURE 11.
Callback Rate, by Race and Criminal Record

The presence of a criminal record decreases the probability of receiving a call back for a job interview.

The pervasiveness and consequences of implicit bias evidenced in everyday life, makes it hardly surprising that this bias has also made its way into classrooms where the youngest members of society reside.
Implicit Bias Inherent in Preschool Suspension

Predictors
- Big
- Black
- Boy

Source: Rasheed Malik. New Data Reveal 250 Preschoolers are Suspended or Expelled Every Day. Center for American Progress, November 6, 2017.
The Danger in Adultification

Black Girls Need Less:

ADULTIFICATION
“A social or cultural stereotype that is based on how adults perceive children in the absence of knowledge of children’s behavior and verbalizations.”

Exclusionary Discipline Outcomes

Poll Question #1

Do you think a preschooler’s own race predicts that child’s implicit bias?

Yes-No-Unsure
Preschoolers Showed Implicit Bias

- Race and gender study of 4 and 5-year-olds

“The majority of children in the study—both black and white—had a ‘strong and consistent pro-white bias.’”

Study Results

- White boys and girls viewed most favorably by preschoolers
- Black boys viewed least favorably by preschoolers

“These findings show that children begin to show bias from an early age. Not only do they absorb the stereotypes they see, but they also become ‘increasingly attuned to social category labels, social status, and the biases exhibited by family members…”

How Bias Impacts Our Children
Implicit Bias Often Results In…

Racial Trauma

Educational Disparities

Preschool-to-prison Pipeline

Other Trauma
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

**Source:** The Truth About ACEs Infographic. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. May 12, 2013.
At Greatest Risk Are:

- Black & Latinx communities
- Women and girls
- Lower socioeconomic groups

Childhood Trauma and Lifelong Health

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The ACE Pyramid.

Mechanism by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan
ACEs Through an Equity Lens

Source: Adding Layers to the ACEs Pyramid – What Do You Think?
Implicit Bias and Childhood Trauma

Social Conditions

Implicit Bias

Potentially Traumatic Event (PTE)
PTEs and Increased Stressors

Racial Trauma

- anxiety
- depression
- suicidality
- lower self-esteem

Poll Question #2

By the age of 18, what percentage of Black boys have been arrested at least once?

10% - 20% - 30% - 40%
Creating the (Pre)School-to-Prison Pipeline

Nationwide, Black boys receive \( \frac{2}{3} \) of all school suspensions, starting in preschool.

By age 18, 30% of Black boys have been arrested at least once – 49% by age 23.

Implicit Bias Inherent in Preschool Suspension

Black students make up 18% of preschool students, but 50% of those suspended. (Lynch, 2015)

Source: Rasheed Malik. New Data Reveal 250 Preschoolers are Suspended or Expelled Every Day. Center for American Progress, November 6, 2017.
Black Boys Have Disproportionately High Rates of Preschool Suspension Due to...

**Normal Lens**

Being overly aggressive and inherently greater threats to their peers and teachers at ages as young as 3 and 4.

**Equity Lens**

Preschool teachers perceiving Black boys as being inherently dangerous and threatening even before interacting with them.

Harsher, more exclusionary punishments with little thought given to restorative practices.

Racial Injustice & Black Children

A Collection of Stories

Two informal surveys captured stories from 95 families in 17 states

92% are parents or primary guardians to Black children age 18 and younger.

44% are from NY

24% are from SC

Other States: NJ, NC, CA, FL, GA, IN, MD, MI, TX, VA, CT, WA, IL, KY, NH
Increased Worry

Do recent incidents make you feel more worried about your child’s future?

✓ Yes
✓ No
✓ Unsure
Increased Worry About Black Child’s Future

- Yes: 89%
- No: 9%
- Unsure: 2%
Regional Differences in Responses

Survey 1 | Survey 2
---|---
Increased Worry | 91% | 86%
No Increased Worry | 7% | 12%
Unsure | 2% | 2%

Survey 1 - 73% NY
Survey 2 - 46% SC
I feel that she has been treated unfairly as far as discipline [at] her school. After an altercation with a white student, my child was punished more harshly when [it was the other student who] instigated the situation.

(CT, 14-year-old girl)
In 2nd grade my boys experienced a situation where students made a list of the good kids and the bad kids. The bad kids were all of the Black boys – my twins – and the good kids were their white classmates...My child received an in-school suspension for writing a non-violent note to his bully. However, the note delineating good guys and bad guys by color was met with, “Well sometimes children make things up to get out of trouble.” 

(NC, 9-year-old twin boys)
When thinking about how society may view your child’s race and/or skin color, what one word captures your emotion?
Terrified

"In saying I am terrified, I am. I'm very scared...What can I do as a parent to make my kids feel safe? Being "respectable" or engaging in respectability politics doesn't help. I want my kids to be their full and true selves, but I know that doing so could endanger them."

(TX, 1-year-old twins, boy and girl)
Uncertainty

“Their race is polarizing in terms of how they are viewed, depending upon the person. I fear for their safety when they are away from family and major systems such as school where they are primarily safe.”

(FL, 9, 15 and 17-year-old girls, 17-year-old boy)
What We Can Do
A Mission Steeped in Equity

The success of all young children.
“Nothing About Us, Without Us”

Parents/Guardians

Key Stakeholders
How to Better Serve Black Children

Given the current and ongoing climate of racial injustice in our country, what advice would you give or what would you want an organization committed to improving outcomes for children to know, so that the organization can – with empathy and understanding – effectively serve Black families and Black children?
Combat Adverse Childhood Experiences

“I recommend that organizations provide therapy for PTSD, depression and anxiety. My children are fearful of what may happen to them.”

(FL, 12 and 15-year-old boys, 17-year-old girl)
Companies need to learn how to become culturally sensitive. It starts with diversity training. I believe diversity training should be for everyone...Diversity training should be built into every school and every organization that serves children or influences policy.

(NY, 13 and 18-year-old girls)
Focus on Policy

I had to have “the talk” with my two boys at age 7. I never expected that this would be on my list of things to do as a mom so soon in their development.

An early childhood research and policy organization has got to get ahead of the conversation. A think-tank influences policy. Without your organization's guidance on these things we will never get policy that will shift the conversation. You are the experts sitting at the table.

(NC, 9-year-old twin boys)
I am the chair of the Black alumni board at my alma mater, and I know that I cannot solve racism. I deal with racism, but I cannot solve it. White people, especially white teachers, need to not see Black children as a threat. In 3rd grade my teacher asked me how I could dress so nicely if I have a single mom. "Dressing nicely" didn't make her think I was from a home where I was taken care of. Instead it made her suspicious of my means. White people need to do the work.

(TX, 1-year-old twins, boy and girl)
Get To the Root of the Issue

"I shouldn’t have to provide advice. That’s the problem. Why does anyone need to tell racist and bigoted people how to not be that way?"

(NY, 15-year-old twins, boy and girl)
Silence is Consent, Speak Up!

I would want an organization to know that parents are afraid, that we don't trust the very systems that have been oppressing us for years. Racism will not change until our white peers open their mouths and speak. With racial injustice, silence equals consent. Organizations should also note that children begin to recognize their differentiated treatment as early as age 2 and 3. The silence is also noted by children.

(NC, twin 9-year-old boys)
Admit It...We All ‘See Color’

‘Not seeing color' is part of the problem. We all see color, but the respect and dignity need to be the same.

(NY, 13 and 18-year-old girls)
Use White Privilege for Good

“Use white privilege to educate, inform and change systems.”

(SC, 3-year-old boy)
Strengthening Ourselves Internally

- Listening with Humility
- Anti-Racist Commitment
- 21-Day Equity “Kickstart” (Challenge)
- Understanding Implicit/Unconscious Bias Session

DEI Training
Anti-Racist
Research

Strengthening Ourselves Internally
Continues to educate on and work to actively eliminate things such as implicit bias, preschool suspension and expulsion, the adultification of Black girls.

Stays informed of and contributes to the latest research on young Black children.

Shares stories and findings with key stakeholders.
For The Things That Fall Outside of Our Wheelhouse…

Amplify the work of those organizations that are effectively doing the work on behalf of Black children that ICS cannot (e.g., mentoring).
Creating More Inclusive Classrooms

- Suspension and expulsion legislation
- Well-supported educators
- Implicit bias trainings
- Minimizing exclusionary discipline
- Maximizing restorative justice practices

ICS is partnering with Palmetto Shared Services Alliance and Sharp Brain Consulting to offer more in depth implicit bias trainings this spring!
Poll Question #3

Do you see how implicit bias may affect your day-to-day work?

Yes - No
Closing Reflection and Discussion

What are you doing in your daily role to become more educated about and tackle implicit bias?
Her life matters. Her past, present and future matter. Too many times we as adults dim the lights of kids because we need them to conform to what's normal. What if we listened to them more and realized that what's normal for us can dim their light and make them less hopeful for their own futures?

(IL, 3 and 7-year-old girls)