CHAPTER 3

Racial and Ethnic Prejudice among Children

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Pervasive intergroup conflict continues to make national and international headlines, and acts of racial/ethnic discrimination are not limited to adults. For example, in a town on Long Island in New York where some residents were upset about the influx of Mexican immigrant workers, four unprovoked white teenage males set fire to the home of a Mexican family while the family slept inside ("4 teens," 2003). As another example, a group of approximately thirty white teenagers living in an affluent suburb in Las Vegas, Nevada, apparently formed a hate group (311 Boyz) based on Ku Klux Klan principles and have been charged with numerous assaults on minority group members (including two Asian men), even videotaping their vicious acts (Friess, 2003, September 28). Besides such anecdotal evidence, decades of research indicate that racism is a serious problem among children and adolescents in the United States and other countries. Racism appears among children as early as five years of age (Aboud, 1988; Bar-Tal, 1996), suggesting that children often enter school with prejudiced views. With increases in the racial/ethnic diversity of youth in the United States, understanding how prejudice develops and can be changed is urgent. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2002), non-Hispanic whites will no longer be a numerical majority group in the United States starting in 2060. Thus, children in the United States will increasingly learn, live, and work in racially and ethnically integrated settings.

Researchers, educators, parents, and other concerned individuals have long tried to understand and reduce prejudice among children. The goal of this chapter is to provide a summary of the tremendous strides researchers have made in understanding and reducing racial/ethnic prejudice among children. For decades, researchers have tried to understand the atrocious acts that capture headlines, as reported above, and also those that do not make headlines, for example, when a five-year-old girl refuses to work on a puzzle with a new classmate of a different racial/ethnic group, or when an eight-year-old boy mutters a racial slur under his breath in reaction to a different-race peer.

How do we understand these behaviors? Some might suggest that these acts do not represent the children's true attitudes, but rather reflect their oblivious mimicry of the behavior of others. Thus, there is no prejudice to reduce and the acts should be ignored. In contrast, these behaviors may reflect the children's true attitudes; consequently, children could be taught new, tolerant attitudes. An additional interpretation is that children's attitudes and behaviors in part reflect their lack of social sophistication or ability to be tolerant; thus, reducing their prejudice requires developmentally appropriate training in more sophisticated thought processes. These interpretations reflect some of the main theories of prejudice among children.

In this chapter, we review research on the development and reduction of prejudice among children. We begin by elaborating the main theories of the origins of prejudice among children and discuss the empirical research relevant to these theories. Then, we review and evaluate the prejudice-reduction interventions that have grown out of these theories. Future directions for research on understanding and addressing prejudice among youth are discussed. We will conclude with advice for parents, teachers, policymakers, and others interested in promoting tolerance among youth.

THEORIES OF THE ORIGINS OF PREJUDICE AMONG CHILDREN

In this section, we address the question, Why are children prejudiced? We define "prejudice" as the holding of negative beliefs and feelings toward a group and its members or the exhibiting of hostile or negative treatment directed at a group and its members (Aboud & Levy, 2000; Brown, 1995). Although there are distinctions between race and ethnicity (Ocampo, Bernal, & Knight, 1993; Quintana, 1998), racial and ethnic group memberships appear to

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have similar implications for prejudice; thus, we will discuss the findings of research on racial and ethnic identities together. We focus only on ethnic/racial prejudice because of the combined set of features differentiating it from other prejudices. For example, the category of race is less malleable (for example, people may move in and out of the category of overweight), more visible (for example, people's sexual orientation is not a visible category), and allows for social separation more readily (for example, people may be biased toward members of the other gender, while also engaging in very close relationships with them) than other prejudices. We begin our review by describing traditional theories and then highlighting more contemporary theories.

The Authoritarian Personality

For many years, prejudice among children was considered a minor problem. This is partly due to the limited viewpoint of past theories of prejudice development. An early theory of prejudice among children suggested that it was an outgrowth of abnormal development and thus a rare occurrence. This idea evolved from a psychodynamic framework and was articulated by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) in their classic book *The Authoritarian Personality.* The term *authoritarian* describes a personality type characterized by excessive conformity, submission to authority, and hostility toward those deviating from conventions (that is, authority-sanctioned standards of behavior). Adorno and colleagues began their studies on the authoritarian personality in an attempt to understand the atrocities of Nazi Germany. They suggested that such personalities resulted from exposure in childhood to threat and punishment in response to expressions of unconventional behavior. In an environment that forcefully promotes conventionalism and submission to authority, it was thought that children would need to release their aggressive impulses, but that they would not be able to aggress against their authority figures (their parents). Thus, according to the authors, children projected their anger onto other people. Socially unconventional people were a good target since authority figures approved of aggression toward such social deviants, which could include racial or ethnic minorities in certain contexts. This process was thought to give rise to prejudice toward certain outgroups. However, it is clear that the authoritarian personality is not a reflection of a "German personality." Prejudice is pervasive, and atrocities have occurred all over the world at the hands of many

different groups. Prejudiced beliefs are no longer considered an abnormal occurrence (although acts of discrimination are illegal).

The Social Learning Theory

Another traditional approach to prejudice is the social learning theory, which suggests that children learn prejudice by observing and imitating important others (such as parents and teachers), becoming gradually more prejudiced with age. Gordon Allport originally proposed this theory in 1954 in his classic work *The Nature of Prejudice*. Allport suggested that children mimic, and then come to believe, what they are exposed to in their environments. A child who overhears a racial slur from a valued adult will likely repeat that slur, and to the extent that the child understands the meaning behind it, will come to hold the associated negative belief about the group. There is much evidence supporting social learning theory more generally (Bandura, 1977), and very few individuals would claim that we are not influenced by what we are exposed to in our environment. Research, however, has provided inconsistent evidence regarding the relation between children's racial attitudes and the racial attitudes of others in their environment. Much research has investigated the relation between children's racial attitudes and the racial attitudes of their parents. For example, a positive relation was found between the racial attitudes of white fathers and their adolescent sons, but not for black father-son pairs (Carlson & Iovini, 1985). In another study, third-grade children's racial attitudes were not strongly related to their mothers' racial attitudes (Aboud & Doyle, 1996a). Other research has suggested that as black children age, their attitudes toward whites and blacks gradually become more like their parents' attitudes (Branch & Newcombe, 1986). Studies have also examined the relation between children's racial attitudes and the attitudes of their peers. For example, one study found little overlap between black and white ninth graders' racial attitudes and behaviors, and the racial attitudes and behaviors of their peers (Patchen, 1983). Similarly, it was also found that school-aged children and their peers did not generally possess similar racial attitudes, although the children believed that their peers *did* hold attitudes similar to their own (Aboud & Doyle, 1996a; Ritchey & Fishbein, 2001).

These studies examining the relationship between children's racial attitudes and the attitudes of their parents and peers suggest that children may not share their racial attitudes with many of the closest

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individuals in their lives. Indeed, evidence suggests that parents, particularly members of race-majority groups, rarely discuss prejudice with their children (Kofkin, Katz, & Downey, 1995, as reported in Aboud & Amato, 2001; Knight, Bernal, Garza, Cota, & Ocampo, 1993). Ironically, it appears that more racially tolerant parents may not discuss racial issues with their children for fear of bringing attention to race. Yet, it has been shown that when adults and peers address prejudice, it is decreased (Aboud & Doyle, 1996b). That is, it seems that the lack of strong relation between attitudes of children and their valued adult figures may stem from a lack of discussion, not a lack of influence.

For example, Aboud and Doyle (1996b) found that low-prejudice (as assessed at pretest) white third and fourth graders who discussed their racial attitudes with a high-prejudice peer actually lowered their peer's prejudice. Below are excerpts from the tape recording of a high-prejudice (HP) participant and her low-prejudice (LP) female discussion partner, as they discuss the traits of politeness and bossiness. The children were instructed to discuss various traits as they pertained to descriptions of three groups: Asians, blacks, and whites (Aboud & Doyle, 1996b, p. 170).

LP: You go first.
HP: I think *polite* should go with the White girl.
LP: I think *polite* should go with all of them [*referring to Asians, Blacks, and Whites*], cause like everyone should, they don't have to just because their colour or something.
HP: Listen, most of the time, it's really the dark, most of the time are not really nice.
LP: But they are nice, though. So really all of them are polite.
HP: Yea. So, who's bossy?
LP: All of them.
HP: Let's see if they're all polite and bossy. It's not the same thing. They all have to be.
LP: Sometimes, you could be bossy and polite.
HP: That's kinda weird. It's like you're mean and nice.
LP: Well, it's like [name of classmate]
HP: Yeah.
LP: So, it's possible.
HP: They're all the same.

In this example, a low-prejudice child was able to reduce the prejudice of a high-prejudice peer by pointing out instances of cross-race similarity (how members of all groups can be bossy sometimes) and also

within-race trait variability (how whites can exhibit negative and positive traits). Thus, it appears to be possible for significant figures in a child's life to influence his or her racial attitudes through explicit discussion.

Current work on the social learning theory focuses on identifying the most effective types of anti-bias messages. This includes work on multicultural education (providing information about the cultural traditions and customs of groups) and anti-racist teaching (education about historical and contemporary racial/ethnic injustices). This will be discussed in the section describing prejudice-reduction interventions.

The Intergroup Contact Theory

A variant of social learning theory is the intergroup contact theory, also proposed by Gordon Allport (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). According to intergroup contact theory, prejudice grows, in part, out of a lack of personal and positive contact among members of different groups. Thus, intergroup harmony can result from increased positive intergroup contact. It became clear after the initial desegregation of American schools that simply providing the opportunity for intergroup contact did not always lead to improved intergroup relations. That is, even though there was racial diversity in the schools, students of the same race tended to sit together in the classroom, in the lunchroom, and on the schoolyard. Unfortunately, schools help create "resegregation" by "tracking" children according to ability. This tracking tends to occur in discriminatory ways, separating children across race lines; this reduces opportunities for positive contact in the classroom, which transfers to the lunchroom and schoolyard (Khmelkov & Hallinan, 1999). As will be elaborated in the section on reducing prejudice, intergroup harmony can be increased when contact is set up to be individualized (one-to-one) and cooperative, when groups are of equal status, and when the contact is sanctioned by authorities.

The Cognitive-Developmental Theory

An important, relatively new, and influential theory is the cognitive-developmental theory of prejudice. This theory starts from the assumption that prejudice is not a minor problem among children and does not necessarily increase with age. The cognitive-developmental theory suggests that children's attitudes toward racial and ethnic groups are

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influenced by their ability to think about group information in complex ways. For example, a child cannot express empathy for another person until she has the ability to see the world through another person's perspective. Along the same lines, the cognitive-developmental theory suggests that children exhibit prejudice because they are not cognitively sophisticated enough to be open-minded and racially tolerant. With age, presumably all children obtain the cognitive skills that allow for reduced prejudice. These skills are apparently obtained when children are approximately seven to eleven years old. However, prejudice is not perpetually reduced with age. After developing these skills, children may not necessarily use them (as an adult capable of taking another's perspective may not always express empathy [Levy, 1999]). The cognitive-developmental theory was originally articulated by Jean Piaget (Piaget & Weil, 1951) and was applied to the understanding of prejudice by Phyllis Katz (1976), Frances Aboud (1988), and Rebecca Bigler (Bigler & Liben, 1993), among others. According to cognitive-developmental theorizing, prejudice is seemingly inevitable among young children because they lack the skills necessary to view people as individuals. Children tend to focus on surface features and to exaggerate differences among groups (such as assuming that all members of group A do X); only later, as their cognitive systems mature, do they become capable of recognizing similarities across groups (for example, some members of group A do X and some members of group B do X) and differences within the same group (some members of group A do X, and some members of group A do Y). Consistent with these ideas, as early as preschool and kindergarten, race-majority group children exhibit prejudice; examples include prejudice of English-Canadians toward French-Canadians (Doyle, Beaudet, & Aboud, 1988), Euro-Australians toward Aboriginal Australians (Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996), and Jewish Israelis toward Arabs (Bar-Tal, 1996). Young majority children typically assign more positive and fewer negative attributes to their own groups (*ingroups*) than to other groups (*outgroups*), but show a decline in prejudice at around age seven (Doyle & Aboud, 1995; Doyle et al., 1988; Powlishta, Serbin, Doyle, & White, 1994). Research indeed shows that shifts toward reduced prejudice levels are explained in part by acquisition of the social cognitive skills thought to enable prejudice reduction. That is, as children acquire specific cognitive skills, such as the ability to classify others on multiple dimensions (Bigler & Liben, 1993; Katz, Sohn, & Zalk, 1975), the ability to perceive similarities between members of different groups (Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Doyle & Aboud,

1995), and the ability to perceive differences within the same group (Doyle & Aboud, 1995; Katz et al., 1975), their reported level of prejudice decreases. There is some evidence that these age-related differences cannot be easily explained by increased concerns with appearing prejudiced (Doyle & Aboud, 1995).

The cognitive-developmental theory, despite an impressive body of supportive evidence, is not currently defined in a way that explains individual differences in prejudice among children exhibiting similar cognitive skill levels (Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Levy, 1999; Levy & Dweck, 1999). To address this issue, it may be necessary to consider both environmental and cognitive factors (Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996). Indeed, some contemporary research is moving toward an integrative approach, combining elements of cognitive development and social learning theories (Aboud, in press; Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor, 2002).

Other research attempting to understand individual differences in prejudice among children who exhibit roughly the same cognitive skill level has examined children's differing "lay theories" of prejudice (Levy, West, & Ramirez, in press). Like scientists, lay people have theories about how the world works. There are many different lay theories available to help individuals understand how the world works and how people should behave. Lay theories are often captured in everyday sayings such as "it's never too late to turn over a new leaf" and "a leopard never changes its spots." These are examples of lay theories that contradict each other. This may in part explain individual differences in social judgment and behavior. For example, children who hold the lay theory that people can change will harbor less prejudice and are more willing to help disadvantaged others than are children who hold the lay theory that people basically cannot change their ways (Karafantis & Levy, 2004; Levy & Dweck, 1999).

Other lay theory work has focused on the "color-blind" principle of ignoring racial and ethnic differences (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000; Schofield, 1986). Although laudable in suggesting that surface features like race are superficial, irrelevant, and uninformative bases on which to make judgments of people, the color-blind approach to education is controversial because race and other grouping characteristics *do* affect people's lives, and efforts to assimilate immigrants and ethnic groups into the dominant culture often do not work (Garcia & Hurtado, 1995). In the section on prejudice reduction, we will further discuss the utility of a color-blind teaching approach by discussing an intervention based on the color-blind principle.

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Evolutionary Theory

Contemporary theorizing has also begun to focus on an evolutionary account of prejudice. Although given little attention thus far, evolutionary perspectives seem to be gaining a more prominent place in the theorizing of the development of prejudice. According to evolutionary perspectives, prejudice and discrimination are nearly inevitable. Fishbein (1996) argues that the roots of prejudice began in hunter-gatherer tribes and continue universally today because of their success in that period of human evolution. One such proposed evolutionary mechanism relies on a history of related tribe members showing greater preference for each other than for tribe members to whom they are not related, therefore helping and protecting them, which would then maximize the percentage of one's genes that are transmitted to successive generations. Fishbein offers this as evidence that humans are currently predisposed to show favoritism toward individuals who are most similar to themselves. Another such mechanism that may set the stage for prejudice is the human reliance on authority figures to transmit information to their young. This process encourages children to unquestioningly accept what they are told by authority figures, including information about outgroup members. The final mechanism that Fishbein proposes is the hostility that humans have developed in order to protect their children, females, and resources from outsiders. Fishbein argues that the development of prejudice is closely linked to the development of a group identity around ages three or four.

Another evolutionary perspective suggests that children's thinking about social groups is organized according to inherent theories about humans, which guide the way they gather and interpret information about social groups (Hirschfeld, 1995, 2001). These inherent theories help children attend to important group information and ignore unimportant information. According to this perspective, because the concept of race resonates quite well with children's preexisting cognitive structures for differentiating social groups, race becomes a powerful organizing factor for humans.

Despite growing interest in evolutionary theories of racial prejudice, these approaches have generally been criticized for suggesting that prejudice is natural and thus should be condoned. Still, it seems that certain aspects of evolutionary thought overlap with other approaches to prejudice. For instance, similar to the evolutionary mechanism that favors categorization according to similarities to oneself, the aforementioned cognitive theories propose that such categorization

helps individuals simplify the wealth of social information that they encounter. Also, there are obvious similarities between sociocultural and evolutionary explanations that suggest that prejudice grows out of limited resources and social forces. Further, the evolutionary emphasis on accepting information from authority figures complements the social learning theory, which suggests that children learn prejudiced views from their parents and other important people in their lives. However, it may be that evolutionary approaches are best suited to explaining the roots of mechanisms currently facilitating prejudice (such as the methods humans use to categorize groups of people), whereas approaches focusing directly on the current mechanisms, such as the social learning theory or cognitive-developmental models, are best suited to understanding the more immediate, and hence most relevant (for our purposes), causes of prejudice.

Summary and Future Directions

In this section, we have reviewed the main theories guiding the understanding of prejudice among children. Research to date suggests that being raised in a prejudiced environment does not necessarily translate into developing prejudiced attitudes, nor does a tolerant environment necessarily lead to tolerant attitudes. It also suggests that prejudice is not exclusively a problem that concerns adult populations. Recent approaches emphasize the importance of integrating research and theorizing from cognitive, developmental, and social (including lay theories) perspectives on prejudice in the attempt to understand its development. For instance, a key finding is that children are more prone to adopt prejudiced attitudes as a result of cognitive-developmental limitations and that they are more capable of incorporating complex information from their environment around the age of seven. This information may be useful for designing interventions to counter prejudiced attitudes that arise from exposure to biased information. More work is still needed on the role of children's lay theories (the ways that they understand their world) in prejudice development.

REDUCING PREJUDICE IN CHILDREN

Interventions to combat prejudice among children have taken many forms. Typically, these interventions are conducted during school and are sometimes integrated into the children's regular curricula. At times,

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entire schools or districts have adopted interventions as a matter of practice, while others have been the choices of individual teachers. Generally in the United States, prejudice-reducing interventions have focused on the reduction of white children's racial prejudice, given that they have been the dominant majority in society. Although researchers, practitioners, and educators have developed a wide variety of intervention strategies, we limit our discussion to interventions that have been evaluated using quantitative data. We organize our review around the theoretical approaches discussed in the previous section, beginning with interventions derived from traditional theories of prejudice development among children and then turning to interventions based on more contemporary theories.

As noted, the early tendency to explain prejudice as an outgrowth of abnormal development has not proven tenable. Interventions based on this theory suggest that therapy is the appropriate treatment for children who exhibit prejudice. Therapeutic techniques have been used to "treat" prejudice (Cotharin & Mikulas, 1975), but are rarely used today. Relative to other types of intervention strategies, such one-on-one intervention strategies are less than optimal due to the widespread nature of prejudice.

Another core traditional theory is the social learning theory—the idea that children learn, and therefore unlearn, prejudice from their social environment. Intergroup contact theory, originally proposed by Allport, has received an abundant amount of attention in the intervention literature. Intergroup contact that is individualized, cooperative, maintains equal status between individuals, and is sanctioned by authorities appears to be most likely to break down interracial barriers and promote intergroup understanding and friendships. Researchers have successfully shown that intergroup harmony can be promoted by altering features of the classroom environment in accordance with these principles. For instance, Aronson and Gonzalez (1988) designed what is called the *jigsaw classroom*, in which students work cooperatively to learn and teach each other components of an academic lesson. This technique replaces competitive aspects of the classroom with cooperative ones. For example, students in a classroom are divided into six racially and academically mixed groups, each consisting of six students. Each group learns one-sixth of the information that is unique, valuable, and necessary to understand the full lesson. Then, participants in each of the original groups are divided so that new groups are composed of one member of each of the original groups, thereby allowing them to teach each other the entire lesson. Thus, the jigsaw

technique promotes interdependence and cooperation, as opposed to competitive attempts to solve the problem. This form of cooperative learning proved to be successful in improving children's relationships with each other and increasing self-esteem, in addition to the fortunate side effect of enhancing students' academic success. Other variations of cooperative learning are successful at increasing intergroup harmony (Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Slavin & Cooper, 1999). These are beyond the scope of this chapter, but include exciting research on bilingual education programs such as the Amigos Two-Way Immersion program in which monolinguistic Spanish- and English-speaking students spend half the day learning in English and the other half of the day in Spanish (Aboud & Levy, 2000; Genesee & Gandura, 1999).

One unfortunate weakness of the cooperative learning strategy in improving intergroup relations is that cross-race friendships may not persist after cooperative learning ends. In general, cross-race friendships tend to decrease with age (Mendelson & Aboud, 1999; Khmelkov & Hallinan 1999). Decreased intergroup friendship with age is somewhat surprising given that there do not appear to be qualitative differences between cross-race and same-race friendships, which would warrant a greater reduction in cross-race friendships (Mendelson & Aboud, 1999). However, some have suggested that cross-race friendships are generally more fragile (Khmelkov & Hallinan, 1999), leaving them more likely to end when peer groups shrink and dating begins. Research on social reasoning by Melanie Killen and colleagues (Killen et al., 2002) suggests that shifts in children's reasoning may in part account for why cross-race friendships decline. Killen's work has shown that, with increasing age, children (such as seventh-graders) think that it is more acceptable to exclude other race peers from friendships because they believe that groups function better when everyone is of the same race (presuming that they share interests). Younger children tend to reason that exclusion based on race is morally wrong; thus reasoning-based interventions might prove fruitful for them. For example, an intervention could challenge the logic suggesting that one's peer group functions better when everyone is of the same race. Finding ways to encourage racially diverse, cooperative group work in middle school, high school, and college, as well as in nonacademic settings, might also prove beneficial.

Multicultural education (teaching about the history of cultural groups) and anti-racist teaching (teaching about historical and contemporary racial/ethnic injustices) represent two anti-bias messages deriving from social learning theorizing, and neither requires that children

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in the classroom be racially diverse. The most common forms of multicultural education seek to provide knowledge and understanding of diverse groups. Multicultural theory suggests that through learning about cultural groups (for example, being exposed to information about cross-cultural holidays and celebrations), individuals will come to understand and respect different cultures, thereby reducing negative attitudes (Banks, 1995). A criticism of the multicultural theory is that the celebration of differences may increase the likelihood that children and adolescents will place individuals into rigid categories, thereby increasing racial/ethnic stereotyping. This is especially true among children who lack the cognitive sophistication to recognize that individuals fit into multiple categories, for example, based on their age, race, or gender (Bigler, 1999; Kowalski, 1998). Similarly, Rebecca Bigler and colleagues (Bigler, 1995; Bigler, Jones, & Lobliner, 1997) have demonstrated that the use of perceptually salient social categories (such as gender) results in the development of biased attitudes. This occurs, for example, when a teacher uses that group category to differentiate people. Educational curricula that focus specifically on the history of certain racial groups within a racially diverse society may, by highlighting race and racial differences, inadvertently increase children's racial biases. For example, the presentation of race-related educational material during Black History Month differentiates people according to racial group membership. Children exposed to this information may conclude that race is an important dimension along which individuals differ—thus, stereotyping will increase rather than decrease. This work points to the importance of limiting the use of race as a differentiating characteristic in the classroom or, when discussing race, to emphasize the similarities across racial groups and differences within.

Banks (1995) further suggests that effective multicultural education requires that the total school environment be transformed to reflect the racial and cultural diversity of the American society and to help all children experience educational equality. Banks suggests that changes be made in the "values and attitudes of the school staff, curricula and teaching materials, assessment and testing procedures, teaching and motivational styles, and values and norms sanctioned by the school" (p. 329). Banks's multicultural school reform proposal appears less susceptible to some of the concerns raised about proposals that include minimal additions to school curricula (such as inclusion of race-related material only as part of a month-to-month recognition of nonmajority groups).

Often going hand in hand with multicultural education efforts, anti-racist education seeks to provide an in-depth awareness of the history and roots of inequality (Fine, 1995). Thus, anti-racist teaching confronts racism head-on with descriptions of past and contemporary discrimination and inequalities, pointing out the forces that maintain racism. This may increase empathy and at the same time discourage future racism. However, if not done carefully, such teaching could be counterproductive for both perpetrators and targets of racism. By providing insight into the prejudice of the students' ingroup and the students' own prejudiced reactions, students may feel angry or self-righteous (Kehoe & Mansfield, 1993). Yet, a reaction of guilt may have positive outcomes in older adolescents. For example, research with college-age students suggests that guilt can be a motivating force in reducing people's expression of prejudice (Monteith, 1993). It is important to note, however, that discussions of race may be threatening or humiliating to children who are members of the discriminated group (McGregor, 1993). Therefore, although perhaps a powerful intervention, it is necessary that steps be taken to minimize potentially negative side effects of anti-racist education, for example, by providing examples of majority group members who are working to end racism and by pointing out similarities between groups to avoid stereotyping.

Although relatively modern, cognitive-developmental theory has served as a base for several interventions, generally involving skill training. Katz (1973) trained children to perceive differences among members of the same group. This intervention targeted children who were just obtaining this ability (seven-year-olds) and those who likely had already obtained the ability (ten-year-olds). In this brief intervention lasting approximately fifteen minutes, Katz and Zalk taught white children to differentiate among photographs of either black children (experimental condition) or white children (control condition). Two weeks later, children in the experimental condition gave fewer prejudiced responses than those in the control condition, regardless of age. These findings were replicated in a follow-up study (Katz & Zalk, 1978) and extended by Aboud and Fenwick (1999), to be discussed later.

Similar to interventions based on the cognitive-developmental theory, empathy training relies on age-related cognitive skills such as perspective-taking, but includes an additional focus on the understanding and experience of emotions. Presumably, through empathy training, children can place themselves in the shoes of outgroup members who are faced with discrimination, and thus be motivated to alleviate

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the others' distress as if it were their own—that is, by acting in a less-biased way toward them (Underwood & Moore, 1982). One of the earliest examples of an empathy-inducing intervention was the classroom demonstration devised by Jane Elliot in the late 1960s. In response to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., Jane Elliot, a third-grade teacher in a predominately white rural town, taught her students how it would feel to be a target of discrimination. Elliot chose eye color as a characteristic that would differentiate the students, telling students on one day that blue-eyed children were superior, and on the next day, that brown-eyed children were superior. She enhanced the lesson by showing preferential treatment to the "superior" group the entire day, and pointing out the successes and failures of group members as evidence of the group's superior or inferior position. Therefore, for one day, each group of children had a first-hand experience with discrimination on the basis of an arbitrary characteristic. This demonstration is so powerful that it has been captured in two films, *The Eye of the Storm* and *A Class Divided*, which are often shown on public broadcasting stations and in schools. However, actual evidence of the effectiveness of the blue-eyes/brown-eyes simulation is minimal. Weiner and Wright (1973), as an exception, tested a variation of the blue-eyes/brown-eyes simulation with white third graders. In this case, the classroom teacher told children that they were members of "green" or "orange" groups and asked them to wear colored armbands. Like Jane Elliot, the teacher encouraged discrimination against each group for one day. Compared to the control classroom, participants in the simulation reported more willingness to attend a picnic with black children. These results provide encouraging support for the impact of role-playing the target of prejudice on subsequent intergroup behavior.

One caveat with empathy training is that age-related cognitive and affective skills are necessary to adequately benefit from the training. Older children who are more cognitively sophisticated than younger children generally have more sophisticated empathy skills (McGregor, 1993). Thus, it is possible that if children lack the sophistication to engage in perspective-taking, as well as the ability to properly interpret the emotional arousal, empathic activities may not effectively reduce their negative attitudes and behaviors. It is also possible that children who do not know how to interpret or react to the emotional arousal may focus on the negativity of the empathy-inducing experience, resulting in an increased negativity or avoidance of the group with which they are supposed to empathize.

Other research suggests that lay theories relevant to prejudice can be altered, at least temporarily (Levy et al., in press). Research on the color-blind view is encouraging. One way to use the color-blind theory to reduce racial prejudice is to turn people's attention toward the universal qualities of humans instead of racial group membership. Houser (1978), for example, examined whether stereotyping toward several ethnic groups would be reduced among five- to nine-year-old children who watched (versus did not watch) films promoting the message that it is important to focus on universally shared qualities. For example, one film called *The Toymaker* depicted the story of two puppets who were best friends until they looked in the mirror and realized that one had stripes and the other had spots. The toymaker pointed out that they were both created by the same person and were essentially connected to each other (each covering one hand of the toymaker). Although the film clips were brief (approximately ten to fifteen minutes), children who watched them reported a decrease in stereotyping toward several ethic groups from pretest to posttest, relative to children who did not view any films but rather participated in regular classroom activities. Alternatively, the color-blind theory could be used to reduce racial prejudice by redirecting children's focus from racial group membership to the unique internal characteristics of individuals (such as likes and dislikes) (Aboud & Fenwick, 1999; Schofield, 1986). Aboud and Fenwick (1999), for example, found that ten-year-old white children who participated (versus did not participate) in an eleven-week school-based program that trained them to focus on the internal attributes of people demonstrated a decrease in prejudice toward blacks. Throughout the program, children participated in a number of activities in which the theme of each activity was "There is more to me than meets the eye." To illustrate the idea that people possess unique qualities, one activity had participants presented with photographs of different children and then provided with those children's names and individualized trait descriptions, such as the children's likes, dislikes, and unique personality traits.

An interesting aspect of the aforementioned interventions is that they incorporate aspects of cognitive-developmental theory in addition to the color-blind theory. That is, focusing on shared qualities overlaps with the evolving social-cognitive ability of noticing cross-group similarities. Likewise, focusing on unique qualities of individuals is similar to the evolving social-cognitive ability of noticing within-group differences. This overlap is an important one and suggests that social cognitive skills can be taught and strengthened through anti-bias messages.

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Summary and Future Directions

Although there is not space to review all of the innovative interventions, it is clear from this selective review that researchers have made tremendous gains in understanding how to reduce prejudice. When the environment is racially diverse, implementing a cooperative learning technique is an effective vehicle for reducing prejudice and also enhancing academic success for all students. Regardless of the racial composition of the environment, other interventions based on social learning theory, such as multicultural education and anti-racist teaching, have much to offer. However, as mentioned, there are some counter-intuitive traps in these interventions that could actually increase prejudice.

Despite impressive progress, there is much that needs to be tested and integrated. This is an exciting time in the field, as abundant findings have begun to amass. It is clear that prejudice is multifaceted and is more likely to be reduced with multiple approaches. For example, it seems worthwhile for schools to consider implementing programs that draw on elements of multicultural education (to appreciate the richness and varying experiences of people from differences cultures) and anti-racist education (to highlight that racism is still a problem), as well as incorporating the color-blind view (to reduce the focus on surface features like race).

It is also important that researchers expand intervention efforts and theorizing. Much research has focused on whites or white-black relations while ignoring other racial/ethnic intergroup relations. It is also clear that children's ages, or social-cognitive skill levels, need to be taken into account rather than employing a "one size fits all" approach.

In addition to directly intervening on children to reduce their prejudice, we might consider intervening on other levels as well (Banks, 1995). We have seen that children's prejudiced attitudes arise from a variety of sources. Thus, we ought to consider a variety of sources through which to counter this prejudice. Indeed, some programs have added a teacher-training component (Verma & Bagley, 1979); and as discussed later, a strong alliance with teachers seems to be a necessity for interventions to succeed.

Another issue in future research is the need to study students at schools with race problems. Not surprisingly, many of the schools that are most willing to participate in interventions are the schools that are already implementing prejudice-reducing strategies and, relative to other schools, have fewer race problems. It is clear that children at

participating schools tend to have relatively low prejudice scores even before the interventions (Gimmestad & de Chiara, 1983). This limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the study and fails to accomplish the goal of the interventions—to reduce prejudice. Researchers have lamented the difficulty of securing participation from schools (Verma & Bagley, 1979), an obstacle made even more threatening as the recent emphasis on standardized testing has reduced the time available for nonacademic school-based activities. Thus, future interventions may need to be integrated into the regular lessons. As can be seen, a key to success in the design and implementation of effective interventions is a strong partnership among researchers, educators, and parents.

CONCLUSION

Children exhibit racial and ethnic prejudice from a young age. Prejudice is to some degree inevitable because of limited environmental resources leading to intergroup conflict and because of people's limited cognitive resources. However, we now have a much better understanding of prejudice and potential ways to reduce it. It is clear that prejudice has multifaceted origins; therefore, a multifaceted approach to reducing prejudice is optimal. Drawing on the research reviewed, we offer suggestions for parents, teachers, policymakers, and others interested in promoting tolerance. The suggestions are summarized in the "toolbox for change" below.

Parents, educators, and other important figures in a child's life need to be actively engaged in monitoring and modifying children's exposure to race information (including exposure to negative influences, such as particular movies or television shows). As noted, some evidence suggests that parents (including open-minded, tolerant ones) are not discussing race issues with their children; however, research suggests that discussions about race issues, with an emphasis on anti-bias messages, could reduce children's prejudice levels.

Research on the social-cognitive development of prejudice has shown that children's cognitive skill levels and readiness for learning new skills (such as perspective-taking) influence their interpretations of race-related information. Thus, educators and parents must determine a child's level of social-cognitive development and meet the child at this level with anti-bias messages or influences. Some techniques may be more flexible than others in the extent to which they can be modified to meet the cognitive needs and limitations of children.

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However, inducing cooperative and interdependent, as opposed to competitive, learning environments that involve children from different racial backgrounds appears to be beneficial regardless of age.

Educators and policymakers need to make a true commitment to promoting racial tolerance in the schools. This can be accomplished by integrating racial tolerance into school curricula, assessment and testing

Toolbox for Change

For	Images/perceptions of current society	Strategies for change
Individuals	Discussions of race are not needed and could increase prejudice.	Discuss race with children openly and honestly at home and elsewhere at a cognitive-developmentally appropriate level. Promote interracial relations and learning about other groups, but be careful not to overemphasize differences among groups.
Community	Communities are already doing enough to encourage open discussion about race, and racism is not a problem among children.	Provide forums in the community where racism among all age groups is discussed. Institutionalize approval for nonprejudiced attitudes through policies that involve every part of the community.
Practitioners/educators	School is not the place for prejudice-reduction interventions because time spent on interventions takes away valuable time from fostering academic success.	Integrate multicultural and anti-racist teaching into the basic academic curricula (such as social studies and reading). At racially/ethnically diverse schools, utilize cooperative learning strategies, which also foster academic success.

procedures, teaching styles, and norms sanctioned by the schools. Care needs to be taken that methods do not set other groups apart, for example, by devoting each month to celebrating a different racial or ethnic group, as research has shown that this technique can actually increase prejudice.

In conclusion, prejudice continues to create barriers for the learning and development of children from all racial and ethnic groups. With the increasing diversity of youth in the United States, it is particularly timely and important to make progress toward understanding and reducing racial/ethnic prejudice among children. The research reviewed in this chapter gives us reason to hope that prejudice can be reduced and tolerance can be increased in the near future.

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