Do Early Educators’ Implicit Biases regarding Sex and Race Relate to Behavior Expectations and Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions and Suspensions?

Walter S. Gilliam, Ph.D.

Angela Maupin, Ph.D.
Chin Reyes, Ph.D.
Maria Accavitti, B.S.
Frederick Shic, Ph.D.

Yale Child Study Center
Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy

*All videos and photos have been consented for use in the presentation*
US Department of Education
Office of Civil Rights (2014, 2016)

http://ocrdata.ed.gov

• March 2014
  – “Black children make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of preschool children suspended more than once.”
  – “Boys receive more than three out of four out-of-school preschool suspensions.”

• June 2016
  – Black preschoolers 3.6 times as likely to be suspended as white preschoolers
  – Blacks represent 19% of preschoolers, but 47% of suspensions
  – Boys represent 54% of preschoolers, but 78% of suspensions
So, Why Are Our Boys and Our Black Children Most At Risk?

- **Potential Reasons:**
  - Boys are more susceptible to stressors (Autor et al, 2015).
  - Children of color *often* have more stressors.
  - Children of color *often* attend programs of poorer quality and fewer resources (Barnett et al, 2013).

- Yet, these alone don’t seem to account for all of the disparities in early suspensions and expulsions.
What Else May Account?

- Is it possible that implicit biases may play a role in identification of challenging behaviors?
  - Black boys more likely to be suspended/expelled for similar behaviors in elementary school (Skiba et al., 2011).
  - Biases about black boys
    - Older (Goff et al., 2014)
    - Culpable (Goff et al., 2014; Eberhardt et al, 2004; Todd et al., 2016)
    - Less likely to feel pain (Dore et al., 2014)
  - Shifting Standards (Harber et al., 2012)
Questions

• Do early childhood teachers/providers expect certain preschoolers to be more likely to misbehave, so they watch them more closely?

• What is the nature of implicit biases regarding children’s challenging behaviors?

• When teachers/providers know family stressors that might help explain the behaviors, does this reduce perceived severity and biases?
METHOD
Participants (N = 132; 94% Female)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center director</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., combination of professional roles)</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center type</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith-affiliated program</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-based PreK</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For profit</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., independent school, special education)</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Race</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years working at current location</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years working in early education</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Procedures
EYE TRACKING TASK
Eye Tracking Procedures

- **Instructions:** “Now you are ready to view a series of video clips lasting 6 minutes. We are interested in learning about how teachers detect challenging behavior in the classroom. Sometimes this involves seeing behavior before it becomes problematic. The video segments you are about to view are of preschoolers engaging in various activities. Some clips may or may not contain challenging behaviors. Your job is to press the enter key on the external keypad every time you see a behavior that could become a potential challenge [experimenter demonstrates]. Please press the keypad as often as needed.”
Eye Tracking Procedures
Sample Clip

Video removed
Which child required the most of your attention?

- Please refer to brief (link at end of presentation) for specific Figures.
Eye Tracking Results

**Main:** $\Lambda = .693$, $F = 50.87$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.33$.

**Interaction:** $\Lambda = .925$, $F = 9.36$, $p < .01$, $d = .57$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eye-tracking: Dwell Time ($N=116$)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black boy</td>
<td>0.2823</td>
<td>0.0699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black girl</td>
<td>0.2584</td>
<td>0.0481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White boy</td>
<td>0.2258</td>
<td>0.0487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White girl</td>
<td>0.2334</td>
<td>0.0475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Heat Map

\[ x^2 = 39.09, \ p < .001. \]
VIGNETTE TASK
Vignette Procedure

• “Act as if this child is in your classroom”

• Standardized vignette, manipulated child sex and race: DeShawn, Latoya, Jake, Emily

• Background or No Background

• $2 \text{ (child sex: male vs. female)} \times 2 \text{ (child race: Black vs. White)} \times 2 \text{ (background vs. no background)}$ design: 8 conditions

• **Measures**: Severity, Hopelessness (PERM), Likelihood of Recommending Suspension or Expulsion
Vignette Results

\[ F=8.99, \ p=.004, \ \eta^2=.10. \]
Teacher-Child Race Match

\[ F=5.69, \ p=.019, \ \eta^2=.06. \]
Findings & Implications

- Teachers/providers appear to expect challenging behaviors more from Blacks and specifically Black boys.

- Without family background, White teachers/providers seem to hold Black children to low behavioral expectations.

- Family background information causes very different effects based on teacher-child race match.
Acknowledgements

• People
  – Dan Huber for filming the videos
  – Joelle Jude Fontaine, Craig Holloway and Dr. Howard Stevenson
  – Amalia Londono Tobon, M.D. and Sarah Grossman-Kahn

• This study was supported by a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

• The teacher videos discussing the study was made possible by support from Scholastic, Inc.
Do Early Educators’ Implicit Biases Regarding Sex and Race Relate to Behavior Expectations and Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions and Suspensions?

Walter S. Gilliam, PhD
Angela N. Moser, PhD
Chin B. Reyes, PhD
Maria Accarditi, BS
Frederick Stac, PhD
Yale University Child Study Center // September 28, 2016

1 This is a research brief providing basic information regarding the methods, findings and implications from the described study, for presentation at the U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) 2016 State and Territory Administrators Meeting in Alexandria, Virginia on September 28, 2016. More detailed information may be provided upon request.

Acknowledgements: This work was completed through a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. All photos of children are presented with permission of their parents. The authors also wish to acknowledge Amalia Lousier-Tobin, MD and Sarah Gerson-Rahn for their assistance in collecting the data and preparing the videos for analysis; Dan Holen for filming the videos used in this study; and useful comments from Joelle Joly Farkaas, Craig Holloway, and Dr. Howard Sweeney.