

Chapter 12

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CREATING A SOCIETY OF EQUALS

Reducing Social Exclusion and Harassment in Schools

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Schools are an important context for the development of children and adolescents' social and moral development, group identity, and becoming a member of a community (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021; Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2019). Interacting with peers and non-parental adults enables children to acquire moral judgment and to think about the needs and concerns of others. Group identity is fostered through becoming a member of multiple groups, which provide protection, safety, and enjoyment. Children learn from teachers who communicate values and ideas that are often different from parents, providing a contrast of perspectives that helps children become autonomous thinkers. Even schools that might be homogeneous concerning race and ethnicity reflect heterogeneity regarding other group identity categories, such as religion, SES, gender and sexual identity, and nationality (among others). This variability creates an opportunity to learn about those from different group identities, and it also provides the context for complex intergroup dynamics, such as in-group preference, and, in some contexts, out-group distrust. Thus, we assert that while schools also have the potential to promote the fair, equitable, and equal treatment of others, this depends on the degree to which the climate of the school reflects an inclusive environment (Killen et al., 2021a; Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021; Turiel, 2015).

We propose that the implementation of evidence-based, developmentally appropriate education programs in classrooms to promote social equity and inclusion is essential for achieving the goals of a just community (Killen & Rutland, 2022; London et al., 2014). Inclusive and anti-discriminatory policies in schools and classrooms necessitate that teachers create learning environments where all students can work together to succeed and all students recognize that diversity and fairness are vital to healthy development (Losinski et al., 2019; Nenadal & Mistry, 2018). The creation of supportive and inclusive learning environments by teachers contributes

to stronger student-teacher relationships for all students and is vital for student engagement and learning (Hamre & Pianta, 2006; Kaufman & Killen, 2022; Wigfield et al., 2015). The presence and promotion of positive intergroup peer relationships lead to increased helping of out-group peers, the reduction of out-group biases, the promotion of children's rights, and the promotion of academic achievement for all students (Abbott & Cameron, 2014; Fiske, 2002; Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014).

Additionally, when teachers and school personnel include students in discussions about social inequalities, and how to address these social inequalities, children and adolescents are encouraged to challenge unfair peer treatment (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021; Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2019). The implementation of evidence-based, developmentally appropriate education and intervention programs can help children become agents of change. These programs can do this by giving children and adolescents opportunities to discuss and reflect on social inequalities and social exclusion (Brinkman et al., 2010; Killen & Rutland, 2022; Killen et al., 2022; Les-sard et al., 2020; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018).

Goals of the Current Chapter

Thus, we begin this chapter with a review of research about social exclusion based on group membership in school contexts, including research on moral reasoning in the context of intergroup relationships. Essential questions pertain to when children and adolescents develop an awareness that individuals experience social inequalities and inequitable treatment due to prejudicial attitudes and biases and recognize the necessity for solutions. Next, we summarize recent intergroup interventions that have utilized intergroup contact, mutual respect, and cooperative interactions, to reduce bias and prejudice in classroom and school environments. Finally, this chapter proposes new directions for research and interventions designed to reduce social exclusion and increase social equality in classrooms and schools. We suggest how these new lines of research might inform and improve school-based programs. This chapter will focus on multiple social group identities, given that individuals are simultaneously members of more than one social group.

Social Exclusion in School Contexts

Children experience social inclusion and exclusion in school. *Social exclusion* refers to instances when individuals are excluded by a peer or group of peers and includes both *interpersonal* forms of exclusion and bullying; as well as *intergroup* forms of exclusion and bias-based bullying. *Interpersonal* exclusion and bullying occur when an individual is excluded or bullied due to their *personal* characteristics, like shyness or being socially withdrawn (Rubin et al., 2006). *Intergroup* exclusion is when an individual is excluded or bullied due to their social group membership (e.g., a girl not being allowed to join a group of boys playing soccer based on her gender) (Mulvey, 2016). *Bias-based* bullying is a form of intergroup exclusion, where an individual is bullied based on their group memberships such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, immigrant status, race, or religion (Bradshaw & Johnson, 2011; Cooley et al., 2019; Møller & Tenenbaum, 2011; Poteat et al., 2011).

When an individual is excluded or bullied because of their group membership characteristics, such as in the case of intergroup exclusion and bias-based bullying, this constitutes a form of prejudice (Horn & Sinno, 2014). Similarly, bullying, which is defined as explicit, repeated aggression targeted at disadvantaged and/or powerless individuals (Jimerson et al., 2010; Olweus, 1993), is an act of aggression towards another person, reflecting a form of moral

transgression (Hymel et al., 2010; Thornberg, 2010). Thus, when intergroup exclusion escalates into explicit, repeated aggression towards an individual based on their group membership (i.e., bias-based bullying) it is a moral transgression. Intergroup exclusion, as a whole, is nuanced and complex. There are instances where intergroup exclusion is commonly accepted (such as same-gender sports teams). Children and adolescents often exclude out-group peers due to in-group preference (Dunham et al., 2011; Kinzler & Spelke, 2011; Levy et al., 2016), concerns about group functioning (Rutland & Killen, 2017) and expectations that including out-group members would be uncomfortable due to a lack of similarity (Hitti & Killen, 2015; Killen et al., 2010; Stark & Flache, 2012). Moreover, exclusion is not always an act of explicit out-group bias or prejudice (Kaufman & Killen, 2022). Oftentimes, children and adolescents are unaware that in-group preference translates into exclusion of someone perceived to be different because of their group identity.

Many of the existing educational programs regarding social exclusion focus on *interpersonal* exclusion and bullying (Hong et al., 2018; Garnett et al., 2014). Interpersonal bullying programs focus on bystander intervention and socio-emotional learning, with an emphasis on the *individual*-level personality deficits of “bullies” and “victims.” The goals of these programs are to train “bullies” and “victims” to have better social skills, an *individual*-level focus (Rubin et al., 2006, 2015). While more recently, some of these bullying programs have taken on a “group” approach (Strohmeier et al., 2011), engaging entire classrooms, these programs rarely address intergroup exclusion. By focusing solely on interpersonal exclusion, these programs are unable to help educators, administrators, and parents understand and prevent social exclusion based on social group membership and bias-based bullying, allowing intergroup exclusion to continue unchecked (Losinski et al., 2019).

What is missing from schools is an infrastructure to help educators recognize as well as effectively address and prevent intergroup exclusion, including bias-based bullying. Many teachers feel unprepared to prevent or effectively deal with bullying and other victimizing behaviors (Lester et al., 2018) *and* feel unprepared to teach diverse classrooms (Kaufman et al., 2023; Marx & Larson, 2012). If teachers do not address intergroup exclusion as well as more generally talk about the negative effects of bias and prejudice-driven behavior with their students, victimized students will continue to experience a lack of school belonging and low motivation to attend school (Okonofua et al., 2016). A lack of school belonging and low motivation to attend school can, in turn, contribute to negative academic and health outcomes (Walton & Cohen, 2007, 2011; Williams, 1999). This is especially concerning for minoritized students who often do not feel included in academic contexts (Lamb & Markussen, 2011; OECD, 2017a, 2017b). Thus, social exclusion due to group membership worsens the opportunity gap as it contributes to minoritized students’ lack of school belonging and reduced academic motivation (Isik et al., 2018).

Beyond a lack of school belonging and low motivation, experiencing intergroup exclusion is related to a host of negative outcomes. Children and adolescents who have experienced discrimination and prejudice due to their group memberships in the form of social exclusion, including bias-based bullying, experience depression, stress and anxiety (Fisher et al., 2000; Greene et al., 2006; Neblett & Carter, 2012), reduced academic achievement (Alfaro et al., 2006; Benner & Graham, 2011; Chavous et al., 2008; Wang & Huguley, 2012), and overall reduced well-being (Neblett et al., 2008; Russell et al., 2012; Yip, 2014, 2015; Walton & Spencer, 2009). Students who experience social exclusion based on group membership and bias-based bullying may be at greater risk for negative health outcomes, such as substance abuse and mental health issues, than students who experience non-biased exclusion and bullying or who do not experience any exclusion or bullying (Russell et al., 2012; Sinclair et al., 2012). Furthermore, adolescents who

experience bias-based bullying experience more negative outcomes of bullying and higher levels of school avoidance and fear than adolescents who experience interpersonal bullying (Mulvey et al., 2018). This highlights issues of intersectionality, as children and adolescents who hold multiple marginalized identities may be especially at-risk when it comes to the negative effects of intergroup exclusion and bias-based bullying (Ghavami et al., 2016; Lei & Rhodes, 2021; Santos & Toomey, 2018).

Perpetrators of intergroup social exclusion and bias-based bullying also experience negative outcomes from intergroup social exclusion, with individuals who have biases about different social groups enduring health-related stress associated with negative intergroup interactions (Levy et al., 2016; Pauker et al., 2016). Therefore, reducing intergroup exclusion as well as increasing social equality in classrooms and schools has positive attitudinal, health, emotional, and academic outcomes for *all* children.

To adequately address social exclusion and bullying, education and intervention programs need to address intergroup inclusion by changing group norms in the classroom to be more inclusive and less exclusive (Losinski et al., 2019; Nenadal & Mistry, 2018). This includes promoting an awareness of the unfairness and inequality that result when students are excluded from access to resources, opportunities, and group activities within the school context. Next, we turn to our theoretical framework which provided the basis for the hypotheses for the basic research to be reviewed as well as the intervention program described in-depth towards the conclusion of the chapter.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Reasoning Developmental (SRD) Model

The SRD model draws from both social domain theory (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021 (see also Nucci, Chapter 8 in this volume); Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 1983, 2002, 2015), and developmental social identity theories (Nesdale, 2008; Rutland et al., 2010; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to frame a research program on how children and adolescents think about unfair treatment, social inequalities, social exclusion, and harassment in the classroom and school contexts (Killen & Rutland, 2011). In addition to moral reasoning, it expands the analysis of reasoning to include judgments about group identity, group functioning, group dynamics, and group norms. The SRD model puts forth that children bring multiple forms of reasoning to bear on decisions about social inclusion and exclusion in intergroup contexts (Elenbaas et al., 2020). At least three types of reasoning have been identified as central for how individuals evaluate complex social situations inspired by social domain theory (Nucci, 2009; Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 1983) and intergroup dynamics (Nesdale & Lawson, 2011; Verkuyten & de Woof, 2007). The three forms of reasoning include (1) morality (concepts such as fairness, other people's welfare, equality, equity, and human rights), (2) social group identity (concepts of in-group and out-group dynamics, perceptions of group status, group norms, and group concerns), and (3) psychological knowledge, which includes concepts such as attributions of intentions and mental-state knowledge of others (Elenbaas et al., 2020).

The SRD model hypothesizes that moral reasoning helps children and adolescents to challenge biased behavior and bullying and how, at times, individuals justify social exclusion based on group preferences and identity (Elenbaas et al., 2020; Killen & Rutland, 2011; McGuire et al., 2018; Mulvey, 2016). When children and adolescents are asked to evaluate a social exclusion that is explicitly based on group membership (e.g., a boy being excluded from a ballet class due to his gender), children and adolescents largely use moral reasoning, oftentimes

mentioning concerns around fairness (Killen & Stangor, 2001; Killen et al., 2015). Whereas when children and adolescents are asked to make the same types of evaluations in scenarios that are less explicit and more complex, their evaluations are much likelier to reflect in-group concerns, such as group functioning, and they are more likely to condone the out-group exclusion (Cooley et al., 2016; Killen & Stangor, 2001; Killen et al., 2007). With more social experience and age, children are increasingly likely to weigh multiple factors in their decision-making process (Mulvey, 2016). Additionally, many social situations have ambiguity and complexity, in these situations children and adolescents' decision-making is often multifaceted or even conflicted. Thus, to understand children and adolescents' social inclusion, exclusion, and bullying decisions, not only should their moral reasoning be studied, but also their judgments and attitudes related to group norms, identity, and biases (Rutland et al., 2010).

The SRD model also posits that children's psychological knowledge, such as their awareness and interpretations of other individuals' feelings, intentions, and mental states also influence their decision-making process (Glidden et al., 2021; Rizzo & Killen, 2016). This psychological knowledge about other individuals is also relevant to how children think about peer inclusion and exclusion as well as bullying in the classroom.

Social Exclusion and Prejudice

It is important to understand how children and adolescents think about and interpret injustices and inequitable treatments (such as social exclusion on the basis of group membership) as teachers are largely unaware of what children and adolescents think about these topics and this knowledge has helped inform the successful intergroup prejudice interventions which will be discussed later in the chapter.

The Development of In-Group Preference and Out-Group Social Exclusion

Starting from early in development, children identify various social groups and affiliate with some of them, including social groups related to ethnicity, gender, race, and wealth status (Killen & Rutland, 2011; Nesdale, 2004; Olson et al., 2011; Verkuyten & de Wolf, 2007). Membership in different social groups leads to positive outcomes for children and adolescents, such as connection with in-group members and providing a sense of belonging, but also contributes to children and adolescent's adoption of stereotypes, bias, and prejudice, which influences their perpetration and evaluation of intergroup exclusion (Cooley et al., 2016; Horn & Sinno, 2014). Children's actions and evaluations in social contexts are influenced by group membership, with children as young as preschool giving unequal, preferential treatment towards members of their in-group (Kinzler & Spelke, 2011; Renno & Shutts, 2015). Research has shown that, in certain contexts, this in-group preference continues through adolescence and adulthood (Levy et al., 2016). In-group preference, in and of itself, does not automatically become biased or prejudice towards out-groups. However, in contexts that promote and uphold social inequalities and social hierarchies, in-group preference *can* easily contribute to out-group bias (Kaufman & Killen, 2022).

Children and Adolescent Can Understand That Intergroup Exclusion Is Wrong

Research has shown that children and adolescents evaluate the intergroup exclusion of peers based on social group membership as being unfair based on gender (Killen & Stangor, 2001), low socioeconomic status (SES) (Burkholder et al., 2019; Elenbaas, 2019; Elenbaas & Killen,

2018), sexual identity (Horn, 2019; Horn & Sinno, 2014), race and ethnicity (Killen & Stan-
gor, 2001; Killen et al., 2007), and religious identity (Alsimah et al., 2021). There is also evi-
dence that negative evaluations of intergroup exclusion by children and adolescents are present
in many different cultural contexts. Children aged 7–13 years in Japan, Korea, Switzerland,
and the United States, were asked to evaluate instances of interpersonal exclusion (e.g., exclu-
sion based on shyness) and intergroup exclusion (e.g., exclusion based on gender, nationality,
and culture), children, overall, viewed intergroup exclusion to be unfair, whereas there was
more variability in children's evaluations of interpersonal exclusion (for a review, see Hitti et al.,
2011). Similarly, in a study conducted in Switzerland, intergroup exclusion, on the basis of
nationality, was deemed to be more wrong than interpersonal exclusion by Swiss and Serbian
immigrant children and adolescents (Malti et al., 2012). These studies highlight how children
and adolescents have the ability to evaluate intergroup exclusions as wrong across varying cul-
tural contexts.

Research on intergroup social exclusion has also found that children and adolescents justify
intergroup exclusion using reasons based on group identity, group functioning, along with ste-
reotypic expectations about individuals. For example, one study found that European-American
12- to 14-year-olds, overall, expected cross-race inclusion from a group of same-race peers to
be less likely than did White 9- to 11-year olds (Cooley et al., 2019). It has also been shown
that, as they age, American children increasingly expect that high-SES groups will exclude oth-
ers, referencing negative stereotypes about high-SES individuals being entitled or rude (Bur-
kholder et al., 2019). In a study conducted in the Netherlands, a country where negative
stereotypes about Muslim migrants are salient, adolescents became less tolerant of various Mus-
lim practices as they got older (Gielsing et al., 2010). As they age, children and adolescents are
increasingly aware of societal biases and stereotypes about various social groups, including race,
religious identity, and wealth status, which may influence their predictions of others' exclusion
and inclusion behaviors in intergroup contexts. This increasing awareness of societal biases and
out-group stereotypes may contribute to the fact, that as they age, children and adolescents
increasingly predict that their peers will choose in-group members as friends over out-group
member (Roberts et al., 2017; Shutts et al., 2013) and in engage intergroup exclusion (Crys-
tal et al., 2008; Killen et al., 2002), as well as report decreasing rates of intergroup friendship
(Aboud et al., 2003).

Children's and adolescents' expectations and reasoning about intergroup exclusion also vary
by group membership. In some instances, Black children evaluate racial exclusion as more
wrong than their White counterparts in the United States (Cooley et al., 2019). Additionally,
ethnic minority adolescents in the United States are less accepting of common excuses given
for interracial exclusion, like parental pressure or peer pressure, rate social exclusion in more
ambiguous situations as less acceptable, and use more moral reasoning than their European-
American adolescent peers (Killen et al., 2007). This research suggests that being a member
of a minority status group may be related to children and adolescents understanding of the
wrongfulness of exclusion that is based on social group membership.

Victimization of Minoritized Students

Despite children's and adolescents' ability to evaluate intergroup exclusion as wrong and iden-
tify it is a moral issue, youth from marginalized and minoritized groups experience heightened
rates of intergroup exclusion and bias-based bullying. These heightened rates impact low SES
background youth, racial and ethnic minority youth, sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth,
immigrant youth, religious minority youth, and disabled youth. By the age of 14, if not sooner,

students from SGM populations (Espelage et al., 2008), racial-ethnic minority and immigrant populations (Pottie et al., 2015), low SES populations (Due et al., 2009) and the disabled community (Blake et al., 2012) experience high rates of victimization in school contexts. For students from certain minoritized groups, such as disabled youth (Blake et al., 2012) and youth from low SES populations (Due et al., 2009) this increased victimization can begin before the end of elementary school.

This increased victimization is reported in many different countries, including Australia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Spain, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Bjereld et al., 2014; Crozier & Davies, 2008; Gross & Rutland, 2014; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999; Kim et al., 2005; Kosciw et al., 2014; Maynard et al., 2016; Messinger et al., 2012; Schihalejev et al., 2020; Strohmeier et al., 2011; Sulkowski et al., 2014). The fact that children and adolescents can evaluate intergroup exclusion as wrong, yet students from marginalized and minoritized groups experience increased rates of victimization, including bias-based bullying, suggests that in many contexts children and adolescents still accept and perpetrate intergroup exclusion, despite having the cognitive abilities to understand that intergroup exclusion is wrong.

The Influence of Group Norms

Research has found that children and adolescents often specifically reference societal and group conventions, traditions, group identity, and group function concerns, when justifying and perpetuating intergroup exclusion. For example, excluding a peer with different group membership may be justified on the basis of an expectation that the peer will be uncomfortable in the group (Mulvey, 2016). Thus, it appears certain group norms, such as prioritizing the comfort of in-group members, can contribute to children and adolescents' use of prejudicial reasoning and discriminatory behavior (Rutland & Killen, 2017). Other group norms, such as valuing inclusion and diversity, can increase the usage of inclusive and moral reasoning and behavior in children and adolescents (Rutland & Killen, 2017). Additionally, the social context of the classroom and school has its group norms, which may differ from those of children and adolescents' other social groups and may influence children and adolescents' beliefs about and treatment of out-group members.

The Importance of Context

The specific context of the intergroup exclusion, the specific social groups present, and the dynamics between the different social groups present, are extremely important to consider, as these factors strongly influence how the social exclusion is evaluated and reacted to (Mulvey, 2016). In some contexts, children and adolescents will promote equality, fairness, and justice. In other contexts, these same children and adolescents will uphold out-group exclusion and existing social inequalities; how an individual chooses to act is largely driven by contextual factors (Mulvey, 2016). Factors such as the explicitness of the intergroup exclusion (Rutland & Killen, 2017), the intimacy of the relationship (Edmonds & Killen, 2009; Luken Raz & Killen, 2023), the salience of stereotypes about the out-group (Burkholder et al., 2019; Hitti & Killen, 2015), and perceived in-group threat (Rutland & Killen, 2017), heavily influence children and adolescents' predictions about and evaluations of intergroup exclusion. For example, American children think that same-race inclusion is more likely to occur than cross-race inclusion in high-intimacy social contexts, implying that children expect intergroup exclusion in high-intimacy social contexts more than in other, less intimate contexts (Luken Raz & Killen,

2023). Regarding out-group stereotypes, in one study, non-Arab American adolescents predicted whether their in-group, consisting of non-Arab American adolescents, would include an out-group peer, an Arab adolescent (Hitti & Killen, 2015). Non-Arab American adolescents who held stereotypes about Arabs predicted that the American in-group would be less inclusive towards their Arab peer than adolescents who did not report stereotypes, thus adolescent's stereotypes about the out-group influenced their predictions of intergroup peer exclusion. These factors, and others, impact children and adolescents' evaluations and beliefs about intergroup exclusion.

Furthermore, children and adolescents' evaluations of intergroup exclusion will differ based on the social groups present, as membership in some social groups may be viewed as a more acceptable basis for intergroup exclusion than other social groups (Burkholder et al., 2019). For instance, in the United States, though intergroup exclusion based on gender and race are both viewed as wrong by children and adolescents, exclusion based on gender is viewed as *less wrong* than exclusion based on race (Killen et al., 2002). This may be due to social and cultural messages about gender roles in the United States and the fact that gender segregation in childhood is fairly common in the United States, while experiences of explicit racism in childhood may be less common and accepted (Killen et al., 2002). The acceptability of a social group as a basis for social exclusion will vary based on the stereotypes about that social group and the salience of that social group in the societal context (Burkholder et al., 2019). The stereotypes about and salience of different social groups vary across countries and cultural contexts, due to factors such as differing social hierarchies, differing societal mobility, and the specific history of that social group within each country and cultural context. Thus, children and adolescents' behavior regarding and evaluations of intergroup exclusion is embedded within their specific societal and historical context. While the specific social groups being minoritized will vary across countries and specific cultural contexts, the negative developmental outcomes of intergroup exclusion and bias-based bullying remain similar across contexts.

Minority status children and adolescents experience rejection due to their group membership and many are subject to explicit conversations about prejudice, intergroup exclusion, and other forms of discrimination. These experiences may influence their negative evaluations of intergroup exclusion and bias-based bullying (Beaton et al., 2012; Killen et al., 2017). Specifically, these conversations around prejudice and the wrongfulness of intergroup exclusion may help individuals come to the understanding that intergroup exclusion is wrong and help them identify instances of intergroup exclusion. Providing *all* students, both minority status and majority status, opportunities to have conversations like these in safe, supportive environments, may be a means to help reduce intergroup exclusion, and, more generally, social exclusion and bullying in the classroom.

Conceptions of Social Inequalities

To fully understand how children and adolescents think about intergroup social exclusion and bias-based bullying in school contexts, it is necessary to understand how they think about social inequalities more generally, outside of just social exclusion. Children develop the ability to recognize that certain inequalities are not fair and need to be addressed by middle childhood by using moral reasoning (Corbit et al., 2021; Elenbaas et al., 2016; Olson et al., 2011; Rizzo & Killen, 2016; Yang & Dunham, 2022). Additionally, this moral reasoning gets more multifaceted with age (Elenbaas et al., 2016; Rizzo & Killen, 2016). In one study conducted in the United States, children ages five to eight were asked to evaluate resources between two individuals, one from a fictional town that had historically lacked resources, one from a

fictional town that had historically had access to adequate resources (Rizzo & Killen, 2016). The younger children evaluated equal distributions and equitable distributions (giving more to the individual from the resource lacking town) as both being good, while the older children evaluated the equitable distribution as being “fairer” than the equal distribution, as the equal distribution continued the existing inequality (Rizzo & Killen, 2016). The older children in this study had the ability to weigh both the pre-existing social inequality and their evaluations of the different resource allocations in their judgments, while the younger children, overall, were unable to weigh both of these concerns and also displayed a strong preference for blanket equality (a strategy often preferred by young children).

In society, social inequalities are often present between social groups that have been systemically advantaged and social groups that have been systemically disadvantaged, based on historical and political factors. As children’s sense of identity develops, they become aware of whether the social groups they belong to have been advantaged and/or disadvantaged, and they must balance their group identities with their moral concerns.

Challenging Social Inequalities: Children as Agents of Change

In a study conducted in the suburbs of a large mid-Atlantic region of the United States, children ages 10–11 years who were presented with an unequal allocation of school supplies between a school that served Black children and a school that served White children connected this inequality to the existing structural inequalities within the United States. Children ages 5–6 years gave more resources to the Black or White disadvantaged schools but also gave even more resources to their own group, displaying an in-group bias (Elenbaas et al., 2016). Children who gave more to the disadvantaged groups used reasons based on past inequality (“that group has less so they need even more to have it be equal”) whereas children who made other allocations used reasons based on equality and maintaining the status quo. In this study, an awareness of the historical context of different social groups and existing social inequalities contributed to children’s moral judgments about fairness, equality, and equity.

In some instances, children and adolescents negatively evaluate social inequalities, including intergroup peer exclusion, thus prioritizing moral concerns for equal treatment of others, fairness, and the well-being of others (Ruck & Tenenbaum, 2014). However, in other scenarios, especially those that are more complex or ambiguous, children and adolescents may display prejudicial attitudes and positively evaluate social inequalities and intergroup exclusion, giving preference to group identity and group functioning norms as well as bias (Cooley et al., 2016; Killen et al., 2007).

Recognizing the existence of social inequalities and negatively evaluating them is a first step for children and adolescents. The next step is for children and adolescents to pursue intergroup inclusion and friendships, and to actively intervene when they witness intergroup peer exclusion and bias-based bullying. Research has found that adolescents are more likely than children to support bystanders who challenge intergroup peer exclusion when individuals from marginalized minority status groups are excluded. This highlights that with age, individuals are better able to identify when prejudice and discrimination drive the actions of others (Yüksel et al., 2021). Furthermore, with increasing age, individuals become more aware of social status differences as well as existing racial and societal inequalities (Mandalaywala et al., 2020). This increasing awareness of inequalities and improved ability to identify prejudice and discrimination makes children and adolescents more willing to act as they view inequalities as being more unfair (Elenbaas, 2019). Interventions should provide scaffolding to help children and adolescents become active interveners themselves, as opposed to just passively supporting interveners.

Intergroup Contact and Cross-group Friendships

Many prejudice reduction intervention studies draw from the intergroup contact hypothesis, which identifies the optimal conditions for reducing prejudice and bias and which has adapted to school-related contexts (Tropp et al., 2014). When classmates from varied backgrounds are given equal status and common goals to work towards, this enables the development of empathy, mutual respect and perspective-taking. For classroom and school contexts, it is important to note that when authority figures, such as teachers, actively support the goals of cooperation and mutual respect for intergroup interactions, this assists in creating positive classroom environments.

More interventions and programs should consider the power of cross-group friendships, which have been found to consistently reduce prejudice and bias in childhood and adolescence (Echols & Graham, 2020; Killen et al., 2021b; Levy et al., 2016). Cross-group friendships are successful at reducing prejudice as they allow children and adolescents to have experiences that help them challenge and disprove stereotypes about different social groups which are transmitted through the media and other societal means (Killen et al., 2021b). Prior research has found that children and adolescents who have cross-race friends are more likely to reject race-based exclusion and use moral reasoning when doing so (Crystal et al., 2008; Ruck et al., 2011, 2015). They also have fewer negative attributions towards a different-race character in a morally ambiguous situation (McGlothlin & Killen, 2010).

Unfortunately, rates of cross-group friendships substantially decline by early adolescence (Aboud et al., 2003), suggesting that prejudice reduction interventions should begin prior to this decline in order to be effective. Recent interventions that have attempted to increase children's cross-group friendships have been shown to have positive results, increasing children's rejection of intergroup social exclusion and increasing their usage of empathetic and moral reasoning in evaluating these scenarios (e.g., Brenick et al., 2019).

In order to be successful, however, prejudice reduction intervention programs that target the classroom and school environment need to help teach children and adolescents to (a) recognize differences in status, (b) see intergroup exclusion as wrong and rectify intergroup inequalities, exclusion and harassment, in addition to (c) promoting intergroup friendships. As demonstrated by the literature reviewed in this chapter, children and adolescents have the social cognitive abilities to identify social inequalities, intergroup inequalities, and exclusion as well as bias-based bullying, and the skills needed to rectify and intervene appropriately. But children and adolescents need support and scaffolding to more consistently intervene when they witness social inequalities, intergroup inequalities, exclusion, and harassment (Killen & Rutland, 2022). Thus, prejudice reduction interventions need to incorporate children and adolescents' understanding of social inequalities, intergroup inequalities, and exclusion, so as to effectively scaffold their ability to identify these social inequalities, intergroup inequalities, and exclusion, and intervene to stop them when they witness them. Evidence-based prejudice reduction interventions and other education programs that address children and adolescents' understanding of social inequalities have been found to reduce children and adolescents' intergroup exclusion and bullying, (e.g., Brinkman et al., 2010, Killen et al., 2022; Lessard et al., 2020; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018). Evidence-based prejudice reduction interventions and other education programs that are successful in changing the classroom environment have the potential to help students long term. They also have the potential to train teachers and other school personnel in addressing topics of bias and prejudice in classroom and school contexts, as formal training on these topics is rarely present in teacher training programs (Killen & Rutland, 2022).

Intergroup Interventions Designed to Foster Change

Overall, no studies that we know of have focused on whether programs that target multiple social groups are effective for reducing prejudice and bias in childhood, nor do so while promoting moral reasoning and intergroup friendships. The *Developing Inclusive Youth* (DIY) program was designed to fill this gap and a recent evaluation of it found that it was effective for facilitating change.

Developing Inclusive Youth. *Developing Inclusive Youth* (DIY) is a school-based prejudice reduction intervention program that consists of children in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades (ages 8 to 11 years) using a web-based curriculum tool, where they view peer scenarios about intergroup inclusion and exclusion and engaging in teacher-facilitated classroom discussions about intergroup inclusion and exclusion, for eight weekly sessions. The theories that motivated this program included intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Tropp et al., 2014) and the social reasoning developmental (SRD) model (Rutland & Killen, 2015). It was hypothesized that children's experiences of (1) *direct contact* (peer discussions in the classroom with diverse peers), (2) *indirect contact* (watching inclusion and exclusion scenarios among diverse peers in everyday contexts), (3) *authority support* (receiving teacher support for inclusion during teacher-facilitated discussions), and (4) *social and moral reasoning* would help to reduce biases and promote social inclusion.

The DIY program was tested for effectiveness using a randomized control trial (Killen et al., 2022). Results showed that children enrolled in this program were more likely to report participating in intergroup play, more likely to view social exclusion as wrong, and more likely to report positive traits like hard-working, friendly, and smart for gender and racial/ethnic out-group peers. Holding positive traits about social groups you are not a part of and evaluating interracial exclusion as being wrong are some of the first steps towards reducing bias and prejudice.

The web-based curriculum tool consisted of eight different peer scenarios about everyday intergroup inclusion and exclusion across several different target groups (race, ethnicity, gender, immigrant status, and wealth status) (Killen et al., 2022). Each peer scenario set up a situation in which several children were deciding whether to include or exclude a peer who reflected a different group identity. In each context, participants listened to the characters talk about their reasons for both potential inclusion and exclusion.

All participating students responded to four types of prompts in the web-based curriculum tool: *Feeling Attributions* (for each character), *Evaluations*, *Reasons*, and *Decisions*. The specific questions and response options were the following: (1) *Feeling attributions*: "How good or bad do you think X feels when [exclusion happens]?" (2) *Evaluations*: "Is it okay for X to [exclude Y]?" (3) *Reasons*: "You've chosen X, why is that? Choose the reason that you think is most important;" and (4) *Decision to include or exclude*: "What do you think? Should X and Y [exclude or include]?" For example, for the Science/Robot scenario, the Decision options are "Will the boys work on their project without [the girl] or will they invite [the girl] to join them to make their robot?" reflecting an exclusion or inclusion decision, respectively.

After the exclusionary encounter is rectified, the characters in the peer scenarios are shown becoming friends with peers from diverse backgrounds. Thus, children participating in the DIY program witness instances of potential intergroup exclusion, peers discussing the unfairness of intergroup exclusion and, ultimately, intergroup friendship, giving the participating children

several opportunities to think about how to address intergroup exclusion and the benefits of being inclusive towards their peers (Gaías et al., 2018; Graham & Echols, 2018).

During the classroom discussions that follow the web-based tool peer scenarios, teachers were trained to create a safe space for children to express their viewpoints, listen to each other's perspectives, and brainstorm possible solutions to intergroup exclusion and other bias-driven behavior (Killen et al., 2022). Teachers facilitated student discussions by asking the students what they thought about the peer scenarios and whether the events that they witnessed had happened to them. As shown in Figure 12.1, teachers were trained to (1) establish a safe pace in the classroom, which includes children agreeing that the discussion must be kept confidential, listening to their classmates without interruptions, and refraining from identifying classmates by names. During the discussion, children were prompted to (2) make connections between the scenarios and their own experiences; (3) reflect on how their experiences relate to broader themes of inclusivity, anti-prejudice, and anti-racism; (4) reflect on how the story they heard is similar to other weeks' scenarios; (5) get both sides of the story and discuss why each character made the decisions they did; (6) share personal experiences that relate to the week's topic and themes; and (7) provide a wrap up with the inclusion message. Teachers thus engage students in a substantive face-to-face classroom discussion on the topics of intergroup inclusion and exclusion as well as the negative effects of prejudice and bias-based behavior.

Here is one example of a classroom discussion with fourth-grade students in response to the teacher's request for a personal experience of exclusion after watching the scenario about three

Every week:	Park Week 3 Access code: Park		This week:
Safe Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No right or wrong answer You don't have to raise your hand, but no talking over each other Don't call friends out or use classmates' names 			Main Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tucker & Justin discriminate against Carlos because he is Latino and they make assumptions about his identity Owen & Nick are bystanders who don't insult Carlos directly, but are offered the swing instead of Carlos
Make Connections Encourage children to respond to each other's comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you all think about what [student] just said? How does it make you all feel that [student] was treated this way? Who wants to add on to what [student] just said? 	Story Summary Tucker and Justin are on the tire swing while Carlos waits for his turn. Instead of allowing Carlos to use the swing, Tucker and Justin offer the swing to their friends, Owen and Nick.		
Reflect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is this story similar to other stories we've discussed? How do our experiences today connect to students' experiences shared in other weeks? 	Discrimination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What happened in the story? How was Carlos treated? Why did Nick think Carlos was born in Mexico? Was he right? Why might Tucker and Justin care that Carlos is Latino? How do you decide who to play with? 	Bystander <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should Owen and Nick have stood up for Carlos? How could they have done this? Is it hard to stand up to your friends if you disagree with them? What makes it hard? 	
	Personal Experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tucker and Justin assumed Carlos was from Mexico. Has anyone made wrong assumptions about you? Why do you think they did that? Have you been treated unfairly because of your race or other identity? What happened? How did you feel? Why do you think some people get picked on because of their race? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever seen someone get bullied but didn't know what to do? What happened? What can we do if we see someone getting bullied? 	
	Get Both Sides If kids talk about Carlos being treated unfairly: Well Tucker and Justin weren't friends with Carlos, but they were friends with Owen and Nick. Does that make it more okay? If kids talk about Carlos being treated fairly: If it was about them being friends with Nick and Owen, why did Tucker and Justin mention that Carlos is from Mexico?		
	Wrap Up It's important to stand up for people who are picked on or left out—even if it's not the easy thing to do. Sometimes our friends treat people unfairly, but we can decide to be fair and help our friends be kind to others.		

Figure 12.1 Example of facilitator's guide to accompany weekly classroom discussion.

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boys' decision to include or exclude a girl from a science project. This scenario generated a discussion led by the girls about being excluded from soccer at recess:

Girl 1: "The boys never let us play soccer at recess because they say we're not good at it."

Girl 2: "Yeah, that happens to me, too."

Boy: "But we didn't know you wanted to play. We'll let you play."

Boy 2: "Yeah, you didn't tell us you wanted to play but now we know."

Teacher: "What can we do to solve this problem?"

In this exchange, the students were changing the group norms by discussing how to create more gender equity at recess. In a subsequent teacher focus group following the program, one of the teachers mentioned that her class decided to use an alternate boy-girl process for deciding who to pick for the teams at recess, and other classes adopted their solution.

Through providing children opportunities for positive intergroup contact based on mutual respect and cooperative interactions when discussing intergroup exclusion and strategies to address it, the *Developing Inclusive Youth* program helps to change attitudes about bias and prejudice. Importantly, the *Developing Inclusive Youth* program builds and improves upon recent prejudice reduction intervention and education programs, by targeting elementary school-aged children, therefore promoting early intervention, and including several different target groups, thus increasing the pool of individuals who relate to its content.

Classrooms that are welcoming are characterized by students who include others in peer group activities, desire to interact with them and stand up for their peers in the context of unfair treatment. Children's negative experiences regarding discrimination, exclusion, and bias in school have increased over the past ten years (Costello & Dillard, 2019). These experiences are negatively related to academic success (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). The evaluations of the DIY program provide the possibility that a school-based curriculum program focusing on peer interactions can change children's attitudes about intergroup biases and exclusion. Many researchers have argued that intervening early is important, as attitudes in childhood are emerging and still in flux.

Future Directions and Conclusion

Future interventions that include teachers and/or utilize teachers in their administration, such as the *Developing Inclusive Youth* program, should work to collect data on how teachers implement these programs and how factors such as teaching style, teacher-student relationship quality, and teachers' beliefs and attitudes related to bias are related to the effectiveness of these programs (Juvonen et al., 2019, Killen et al., 2022). Teachers' beliefs and attitudes related to bias could include such factors as teacher preparation for talking about race, teacher strategies for talking about bias, and teacher beliefs regarding whether their students experience bias and prejudice.

Future research can also investigate how children of different racial/ethnic identities respond to existing intervention programs and if there are interracial or interethnic differences regarding the effectiveness of these intervention programs (Killen et al., 2022). Furthermore, interventions should continue to acknowledge and incorporate intersectionality (interlocking systems of oppression) and work to improve their conceptualizations of intersectionality (Killen et al., 2022). Many children hold a mixture of identities, having some marginalized identities and some privileged identities, and anti-racist education and social justice education call for *all* children to learn how to become agents of change (Killen & Rutland, 2022; Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021).

Additionally, interventions should continue to include multiple forms of intergroup inclusion and exclusion, such as a wide array of racial and ethnic groups, different SES groups, and different immigrant groups, as well as outcome measures that include the various target groups featured in these programs (Killen et al., 2022). This inclusion will allow future interventions to address a wide variety of intergroup exclusion, including bias-based bullying, as many different social groups are targeted for intergroup exclusion and bias-based bullying (Bucchianeri et al., 2013, 2016; Russell et al., 2012; Salmon et al., 2018). Including multiple forms of intergroup inclusion and exclusion also allows for multiple opportunities for reflection, discussions, and social exchange about intergroup exclusion and bias-based bullying within any one intervention program.

Interventions should work to achieve multiple aspects and goals of anti-racism and social justice education. These aspects and goals include discussions of status, privilege, and power, understanding how others experience intergroup exclusion and harassment (Rogers et al., 2015), the development of skills related to challenging oppression (Hytten & Bettez, 2011), helping students become agents of change for equitable and fair treatment of all (Elenbaas et al., 2020; Killen & Dahl, 2021), and providing opportunities for individuals to explore their racial and ethnic identities (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Hurd et al., 2021; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018). This could also be accomplished by interventions drawing components from critical consciousness-building programs, which currently exist for adolescents (e.g., Diemer et al., 2020), but could be adapted for elementary school students. As children's awareness and understanding of their various identities emerge during childhood, building critical consciousness can occur before the onset of adolescence (Killen et al., 2022).

Interventions could also be made more effective by including a comprehensive, multi-tiered approach that also targets the practices of teachers and administrators (Juvonen et al., 2019), the greater school climate (as perceived by students), and diversity education activities offered (e.g., diversity clubs, lessons, and special events). Research has found that high student-perceived fairness, an aspect of school climate, is associated with higher rates of students reporting incidents of bias-based bullying (Kim et al., 2023). Interventions themselves should be implemented as *part* of a greater multilevel approach.

Future interventions should be implemented in schools with legislative policies that promote and fund inclusive classrooms. Teacher support for reinforcing the ideas of equitable and fair treatment for all students should also be implemented. Additionally, parents should receive materials that explain the empirically supported connections between fair and just treatment of all students, inclusive peer interactions, school belonging, and high academic achievement (Killen & Rutland, 2022).

Lastly, existing programs that attempt to target interpersonal bullying could be adapted to specifically address bias-based bullying. For example, general bystander interventions have been adapted to meet the needs of ethnically blended, low-income schools by including student-identified relevant examples of bias-based bullying based on race, immigrant status, and SES, and modifying existing role-plays to reflect bias-based bullying (Moran et al., 2019). These modified bystander interventions have been successful in decreasing interpersonal *and* bias-based bullying victimization (Moran et al., 2019).

Schools serve as an important context for children's and adolescents' social and moral development. However, many students experience social exclusion and bullying in school and classroom contexts, which contributes to negative developmental outcomes. Most of the existing intervention and education programs to address social exclusion and bullying focus only on interpersonal social exclusion and bullying. This leaves intergroup exclusion, including bias-based bullying, and other bias-driven behaviors unchecked and unaddressed in the school

context. Children and adolescents can identify intergroup exclusion and other social inequalities as wrong and rectify them by middle childhood but often accept or perpetrate intergroup exclusion and other social inequalities due to group norms and in-group concerns. Children and adolescents need scaffolding from teachers and school personnel to (1) help them understand that intergroup exclusion and other social inequalities are wrong, (2) help them identify instances of intergroup exclusion in their day-to-day lives, and (3) give them the skills needed to rectify intergroup exclusion when they witness it.

Intervention and education programs with quality intergroup contact, mutual respect, and cooperation designed to reduce prejudice and to promote the fair and equitable treatment of others can hopefully serve as examples for future prejudice reduction interventions and education programs. The implementation of evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, programs in school contexts can help create a just and inclusive school climate, enabling *all* children and adolescents to experience positive social, moral, and academic growth, thus creating a society of equals.

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