



CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR 2015 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s) Sarah K. Erickson	Project Number S0407
Project Title Preschool and Prejudice: An Observation of Preconceived Ideas of Racism in Children Ages 3 to 8	
Objectives/Goals The objective was to observe ideas of racism in children ages 3 to 8 who are presented with identical dolls of different races and to determine if children ages 3-4 exhibited opinions similar to those of children ages 5-8.	
Abstract Methods/Materials The materials used for the project were: four identical dolls, each of a different race (African, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic), and two tests. Forty six children (23 ages 3 to 4 and 23 ages 5-8) were presented with the four dolls and asked a series of questions regarding the dolls. Before the tests were conducted, each child was asked to identify the race of each doll. Test 1 consisted of both positive and negative descriptions (nice vs. mean, smart vs. dumb etc.) in which each child was asked to identify the doll that best fit the adjective. Test 2 was used to record what each child's overall doll preference was and why. The answers and age of each subject were recorded and analyzed.	
Results The results show that 65% of children ages 3 to 4 chose the Asian and Caucasian dolls when presented with a positive trait and 75% of children ages 3 to 4 chose the Hispanic and African dolls when presented with negative traits. The results also show that 59% of children ages 5 to 8 chose the Asian and Caucasian dolls when presented with a positive trait and 48% of children ages 5 to 8 chose the Hispanic and African dolls when presented with negative traits. When asked which doll the child would most want to play with, 39.1% of children ages 3 to 4 chose the Caucasian doll, 21.7% of children chose the Asian doll, 21.7% of children chose the African doll, and 17.4% chose the Hispanic doll. Within the children ages 5 to 8, 34.7% of children chose the Asian doll, 34.7% chose the Caucasian doll, 17.5% chose the African doll, and 13% chose the Hispanic doll.	
Conclusions/Discussion The data support both the hypotheses. Based on the data collected, children in each age group did display preconceived ideas of racism. The most favored dolls overall were the Asian and Caucasian in both age groups and the least favored dolls were the Hispanic and African. The children ages 3 to 4 generally exhibited opinions of races similar to those of children ages 5 to 8.	
Summary Statement An observation of preconceived ideas of racism in children ages 3-8.	
Help Received None	