

A STUDY OF THE PRESCHOOL CHILD'S CONCEPT OF RACE  
BASED UPON AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHILD'S  
PICTURE INTERPRETATION

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The Kansas State College nursery school is a laboratory for students enrolled in courses of study in the Department of Child Welfare and Euthenics. The nursery school provides opportunity for students to observe children from 2 to 5 years of age and to participate in a program designed to meet the young child's interests and needs. All children enrolled in the nursery school are white. Students are of several nationalities among which white, Negro and Chinese races are represented.

In the spring of 1948, the supervising teacher at the nursery school observed evidences of racial awareness and discrimination on the part of two or three nursery school children toward the Negro students. One of the first comments heard was a four year old who said: "We don't eat with black people, do we?" This was accompanied with weak resistance to eating at the same table with the Negro student, or "black teacher", as the child called her. A later incident occurred when a child refused to have a Negro student help her put on her snowsuit with the comment that a "nigger" would not know how to help her.

During this same semester, a Chinese student who participated in the laboratory was questioned by a child, "Are you a Negro?" She replied, "No, I am Chinese". Some of the children showed continued interest by asking about the Chinese student's dress.

With this indication of racial awareness among the nursery

school children, interest was aroused as to the extent of the preschool child's concept of race. The writer's hypothesis is that the child's behavior toward people of other races depends upon the child's experiences when very young. Better guidance of the child in this area is dependent upon a clarification of the child's concept of race. It was anticipated that this study would contribute to such a purpose.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is (a) to ascertain if the preschool child would express a preference for, an awareness of, or an identification with the Caucasian, Negro, or Asiatic race as represented by selected pictures of children and (b) to explore these findings in relation to the child's experiences with the people and culture of these races.

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is limited information regarding the preschool child's concept of race. Lasker's publication of case histories of children in "racial situations" was based on a questionnaire sent to 899 people throughout the country. Lasker (1929, p.67) concludes:

There seems to be common agreement that children in the lower ages, say up to that of eight, only exceptionally take note of racial differences, and that they are often ignorant of the significance of differences in personal appearances.

Horowitz and Horowitz (1938) were interested in the social

organization of a small rural community in a border state between the North and the South. This social organization was defined in terms of four attitudes, two of which were race and sex. A pictorial form of a "categories" test was devised to test the Negro and white elementary school children. Race attitude and sex attitude appeared to be quite firmly established in even the youngest children tested. Race attitude represented a more fundamental category than sex attitude.

A more recent study by Horowitz (1939) referred to pre-school children's ideas about themselves. The center of interest of this study was in the area of race-consciousness as a function of ego-development. The subjects were Negro and white nursery school children, 24 in all, ranging in age from 2 years, 3 months to 5 years, 1 month. The methods for testing the children were a "Choice" test and a "Portrait" series. The Negro children seemed to have a more definite concept of their differences from one group and similarity to another group than did the white children. Horowitz (1939, p.96) states:

One may conclude that identification with the correct picture indicates an awareness of one's own skin color as a factor of differentiation and similarity. This ability to identify one's self as different from others and as like others may form a basis for later group feeling.

Clark and Clark made two related investigations using the same subjects and methods but a different division of the subjects. The first study was to obtain information concerning early levels in the development of consciousness of self in Negro preschool children with a special emphasis on the begin-

ning of race consciousness. A modification of the Horowitz picture technique was used. These subjects were 150 Negro children evenly divided as to sex and with an age range of 3 to 5 years. These Negro children identified themselves with pictures of colored boys more frequently than with pictures of white boys. The authors (1939, p.598-9) state:

The fact that the sharpest increase in identifications with the colored boy occurred between three and four years level and failed to increase significantly at the five level suggest that either this picture technique is not as sensitive when used with five year olds as when used with three and four year olds or that a plateau in the development of this function occurs between the age of four and five, or the five year olds have reached a stage in self-awareness which approaches a concept of self in terms of a concrete intrinsic self, less capable of abstraction or external representation.

Clark and Clark's second investigation (1940) sought to determine the influence of skin color as a factor in racial identification of Negro preschool children. The subjects were divided on the basis of skin color as to "light", "medium" and "dark". The fact that "light" children identified themselves with the white boy many more times than the "dark" children, suggests an identification of self on the basis of physical characteristics.

Helgerson (1943) investigated the preschool child's awareness of differences. She was interested in the relative importance to the child of the "race factor", "sex factor" and "facial expression" in the child's choice of a playmate. Of the children whom she studied, 108 were white and 27 were Negro. Their age range was from 2 years, 6 months to 6 years, 6 months.



Helgerson used a picture technique to obtain the children's choice of a playmate. The pictures were carefully matched photographs of Negro and white children. Helgerson (1943, p.622) concluded:

The sex factor was of greatest significance in choice of a playmate. The race factor was next in importance.... There was a decided tendency for the older group to choose the colored playmate less frequently than the younger group....

Literature concerned with the development of the concept of race in the preschool child is centered around the consciousness of self and an awareness of difference. Evidence indicates that consciousness of self develops at an early age and is the basis for awareness of and identification with a particular group.

#### PROCEDURES

Three sets of pictures were used in this study. A modification of a sociometric technique was employed. With this technique the child's choice was obtained by specific questions concerning the pictures presented. A thematic response situation was presented permitting the child freedom to tell about the "action" pictures shown. The findings from these two procedures were explored in relation to the information obtained from the parental interview questionnaire.

The subjects of this study were 10 white preschool children, 5 boys and 5 girls, ranging in age from 3 years, 9 months to 4 years, 3 months. These children were attending the Kansas State College nursery school at the time of the study. They had

been enrolled in the nursery school from one to four semesters.

Table 1. Information concerning children.

Child	Sex	Age		Semesters in nursery school
		Yrs.	Mos.	
UO	M	4	3	4
ME	M	4	3	1
IA	F	4	3	4
IC	F	4	3	1
IE	F	4	2	1
HS	F	4	1	2
MC	F	4	0	3
ET	M	3	11	3
IN	M	3	10	4
DO	M	3	9	2

The writer had been an assistant teacher in the nursery school and was acquainted with the children and with the nursery school teachers. To obtain the child's cooperation, the nursery school teacher suggested to the child that he accompany the writer to the classroom to look at some pictures. The room used was in the nursery school building and was equipped with a small table and two small chairs. These were placed near a window where the pictures could be seen easily.

Three sets of pictures (set  $A_1$ ,  $A_2$  and B) were used in this study. Each set consisted of three pictures of preschool chil-



dren, each picture a glossy print approximately three by four inches in size. These pictures were mounted separately on stiff, black mounting board.

Picture set A<sub>1</sub> consisted of three photographs: a white girl, a Negro girl, and a Chinese girl.<sup>1</sup> Picture set A<sub>2</sub> consisted of three photographs, a white boy, a Negro boy, and a Chinese boy.<sup>2</sup> In selecting these photographs, an effort was made to have the figures comparable in size and the facial expressions similar. No effort, however, was made to match the characteristics of the pictures as closely as Helgerson did. In an attempt to eliminate distracting stimuli, each photograph included a chest-head view of the child with background items indistinct or nonexistent.

Picture set B was composed of "action" pictures and each of these pictures represented a different race (white, Negro, Chinese). Each one of these "action" pictures (B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>) contained two preschool children engaged in routine activity familiar to preschool children.<sup>3</sup> Picture B<sub>1</sub> was selected from a booklet called "My Book".<sup>4</sup> The original picture was reduced in size so as to include the two white children dressed in pajamas, one standing and the other sitting on the lower step of a stair-

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix, p. 47-49.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Edna Lloyd, My Book, Part II, Winter. (Nashville, Tennessee; The Graded Press), p. 23.

way. Picture B<sub>2</sub> was selected from the World Outlook magazine.<sup>1</sup> This picture was of two Negro girls standing beside two lavatories with the girl in the foreground washing her hands. Picture B<sub>2,3</sub> also was selected from the World Outlook magazine.<sup>2</sup> The original picture was reduced in size until it contained only an Asiatic girl and boy eating.

The recording sheet provided for the subject's name, date, and age. Space was allowed for checking the subject's choice in Part I and II, for recording the exact words in Part III, and for recording the child's test behavior.<sup>3</sup> The back of the record sheet was used by the recorder for general comments that seemed pertinent to each child's experience.<sup>4</sup>

Preliminary trials with the pictures and the record sheets suggested certain changes in the procedures. The record blank was condensed. The pictures which had been on white mountings were changed to black mountings to eliminate glare. All pictures in the portrait set A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub> were mounted separately instead of by sets.

An adult questionnaire was constructed to ascertain the racial experiences of each child tested.<sup>5</sup> This questionnaire

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<sup>1</sup> World Outlook, New Series, Vol. 6, No. 10, June 1946, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> The test behavior scale on the revised Stanford-Binet scale for measuring intelligence was used as a guide for rating the child's willingness, confidence and attention during the test.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix, p. 51-53.

was composed of factual questions for the purpose of determining if the child had had experiences with Negro or Chinese people or contact with their culture. Some preference questions were included in the questionnaire in an effort to observe the trend of the mother's and the father's attitudes towards Chinese and Negro people. The questionnaire was revised on the basis of criticism and suggestions made by several classes in the Department of Child Welfare and Euthenics.

When the child made a choice during the picture presentation of Parts I, II, and III, the recorder expressed approval. The conversation was kept at a minimum. However, if the child asked a question, it was answered with as few words as possible. After the pictures were used, they were left on the table so that the child could refer to them if he cared to do so.

Part I: Before starting the picture presentation, the following statement was made: "These are pictures of children just about your age. I hope you like them."

Set A was presented in the following manner. The picture of the white girl was placed on the table in front of the child. When the writer was certain that the child had looked at this picture, the picture of the Negro girl was placed to the child's right of the white girl's picture.<sup>1</sup> When it was certain that the child had looked at the Negro picture, the Chinese girl's picture

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<sup>1</sup> When it was observed that the child's eyes had focused on the picture for half a minute, it was assumed that the child had looked at the picture.

was placed to the child's right of the Negro picture. When the child had observed the Chinese picture, the question was asked "Which one would you like to play with?" If no choice was given, the recorder repeated the question. When a choice had been made or the writer felt no choice would be made, the recorder proceeded to ask the question for Part II of the study. (Details of Part II are presented later in the procedures).

Set  $A_2$  (white boy, Negro boy and Chinese boy) was presented in the same manner and immediately following Set  $A_1$  as described above.

Part II: Before removing picture set  $A_1$  (girls) as used in Part I, a second question was asked: "Which one of these children is like the ones you play with here at nursery school?" If no choice was made the test question was repeated. After finishing Part I with picture set  $A_2$  (boys), the above procedure was repeated with set  $A_2$ .

Part III: To be sure that the child understood what was expected of him in Part III of the study, an introductory "action" picture was shown. In this picture a white boy was eating. This picture was presented to the child in the following manner. "This is a different kind of a picture I'm going to show you. This picture tells us something. It tells us that this boy is eating. He has milk to drink. I think this is some cereal for him to eat. It is hard for us to tell what color of hair he has, perhaps it is brown". Following this introduction, the first "action" picture of the study,  $B_1$ , was given to the child.

When the recorder observed that the child's eyes were focused on the picture, the question was asked, "Will you tell me about this picture?" When the child stopped commenting, the question was asked, "Will you tell me more?" If no answer was made to the first question, the recorder said, "Can you see anything in this picture to tell me about?" All word responses given in Part III were written down verbatim.

After the interview with the child was completed, a jig-saw puzzle was given to him. The puzzle was new to all the children and they were allowed to work with it as long as they wanted to do so. This gave the writer an opportunity to record general comments about the entire situation.

The writer had personal interviews with the parents when presenting the questionnaire for checking. This made it possible to explain to the parent the general purpose of the study and to answer any questions the parents might have concerning the questionnaire. The writer suggested to the parent that he omit any questions he did not care to answer. In every case the parents were willing to answer the questionnaire. In only one instance does the writer have reason to believe that a parent checked the answers which she thought were expected rather than those which expressed her own practices and beliefs.

#### CASE STUDIES WITH FINDINGS

Following are case studies of the children participating in the study and presented in decreasing order of age of each child.



Emphasis is given to the results of the picture choices made by each child and the information received from the parents through the interview questionnaire.

### Boy UO

UO was 4 years, 3 months old and had been in the nursery school over one year. He had lived in three states. The family, including a 4 month old sister, live in a four-room apartment in an urban area.

UO had never been to Sunday School because his parents felt he was not old enough. At home he played with boys and girls, some younger and some older. UO had books about Negro and Chinese children and had heard Negro songs. Negroes have visited in his home and his mother has worked with Negro people. The mother related that UO had talked to a Chinese girl about China, war, and children. There was no regular domestic help in the home.

The parents share in caring for UO although the father's work requires long hours away from home so that he often arrives home after UO is asleep. The father is a professor at the college and has a Master's degree, and the mother is a homemaker and a college graduate.

UO entered actively into the picture situation. He was completely absorbed by the task. Although he was interested in the pictures and wanted to take them to show to the rest of the children, he expressed few verbal responses. When asked with



whom he would like to play, his preferences were the white girl and the Chinese boy. He identified the white girl and the white boy as being like his playmates at nursery school.

The following table indicates UO's interest in the story when asked to tell the writer about the "action" pictures.

Table 2. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	: Comments related to race
White children	"Bedtime" "No"	
Negro children	"Washing" "No"	
Chinese children	"Eating time"	

The parents were in close agreement regarding the racial experiences they wanted for their child. UO's parents would allow him to sit near or go to school with Negro and Chinese children. They would invite children of either race into their homes upon UO's request. The mother would prefer white help with the housework but the father had no preference. The mother and father would prefer white help with their child, assuming equal ability.

#### Boy ME

ME was 4 years, 3 months old and had been in the nursery school less than six months. He had lived in two states.

The family, including a 1 year old brother, live in a five-room house in an urban area.

ME had group experiences in Sunday School where he willingly remained without his parents. His playmates at home were boys and girls, some younger and some older. He had books about Negroes, had heard songs, and had talked to his parents about them. There had never been domestic help in the home.

The parents share in caring for ME. The father is a college professor and the mother, now a homemaker, had three years of nurse's training.

ME entered willingly into the picture presentation interview. He was not entirely self-reliant but there was little interference from outside stimuli. When asked with whom he would like to play, his preferences were the Chinese girl and the Chinese boy. He identified the white girl and the Chinese boy with his playmates at nursery school. The following table indicates that ME was interested in the story and that he noted boy and girl differences when asked to tell the writer about the three "action" pictures:

Table 3. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	: Comments related to race
White children	"No" "No cause I don't it"	
Negro children	"He's washing his hands" "Another little girl is getting ready her hands".	
Chinese children	"He's drinking chocolate milk". "Little girl" "No"	

The parents agreed on the kind of racial experiences they wanted their child to have. ME's parents would allow him to sit near and go to school with Negro and Chinese children. They would not invite a Negro to ME's birthday party, because the mother said "I do not believe in intermixing socially with the white" and the father said "Embarrassing questions might be asked." Neither parent had any objections to Chinese children.

#### Girl IA

IA was 4 years, 3 months old and had been in the nursery school for two years. She had lived in the same town all her life. The family, including a brother 8 years old, live in a house in an urban area.

IA enjoyed going to the Presbyterian Sunday School and she has heard about Negro and Chinese people while there. Her playmates include both boys and girls near her age. Her peers and adults find her pronunciation difficult to understand. She has had books, music and records telling about Negro and Chinese people, and she owns a Negro doll that is a favorite toy. Her parents state that IA has talked to them about Negro and Chinese people. The mother recalled the following statement: "Miss X (Negro girl) played the piano for us". The family has had Negro and white domestic help. College students have been in the home in the capacity of "baby sitter".

The parents share in caring for IA. The father is a business man and has attended two colleges as a special student in

music; the mother, now a homemaker, has a college degree.

IA entered willingly into the task and was rather self-confident. There was little interference from distracting stimuli. When asked with whom she would like to play, her preferences were the Negro girl and the Negro boy. She selected the white girl and the Chinese boy as being like her playmates at nursery school.

The following table indicates IA's responses were descriptive and in a story form. She also noted boy and girl differences when asked to tell the writer about the three "action" pictures:

Table 4. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	: Comments related to race
White children	"I can't read" "Boy and a girl"	
Negro children	"Two girls washing their hands."	
Chinese children	"Boy and girl eating" "Some railing"	

The parents differed slightly in their preference for racial experiences for their child. The mother stated she would sit next to a Negro or a Chinese on a bus; the father, "Only if no other choice of seats". The mother would allow her daughter to attend a school where there were Negro and Chinese children, and the father would "If only a few" attended. The mother would

be willing to invite both Negro and Chinese children to her daughter's birthday party if she "particularly asked to. I wouldn't think of it or suggest it myself". However, the father would object, "Principally for the same reasons I would exclude a white". The parents would prefer white domestic and child help, assuming equal ability.

#### Girl IC

IC was 4 years, 3 months old and had been in the nursery school less than 6 months. She had lived in five states. The family, including a brother 3 years, 1 month old and a sister 1 year, 8 months old, live in a seven-room house in an urban area.

She has had group experiences in the Methodist Sunday School where she willingly remained without her parents. IC's playmates at home include two children the same age and two younger. She had seen and talked to her mother about Negro people, but had never seen Chinese people. She has no books, music, or records about Negroes or Chinese. There was no regular domestic help although relatives aid in caring for IC.

The parents share in caring for IC although her father was away from home occasionally. The father, a professional man, has a college degree, and the mother, a homemaker, has graduated from high school.

IC entered willingly into the task and was extremely self-confident. She talked incessantly during the picture presentation. When asked with whom she would like to play, her pref-



erences were the Chinese girl and the Chinese boy. She selected the Chinese girl and the white boy as being like her playmates at nursery school.

The following table of IC's responses to the "action" pictures suggests racial identification.

Table 5. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	Comments related to race
White children	"I don't sleep upstairs".	"That's _____" (sister's name). "That's me". "Cause that's me".
Negro children		"Is she just like this one?" "Is he like this one?" (pointing to Negro girl portrait) "Oh she is like that girl".
Chinese children		"Is this one about that girl?" (pointing to Chinese girl in action picture and Chinese girl in photograph). "This boy is like this one" (Pointing to the Chinese boy and then to the Negro boy in the photograph). "It is!" (emphatic).

The parents differed slightly in the racial experiences they preferred for their child. The parents would allow her to sit near and go to a school where there were Negro and Chinese children. The mother would be willing to invite both Negro and Chinese children to IC's birthday party, but the father would object to a Negro child "because of the possibility it might ostracize her with respect to her playmates, whose parents would



regard it as a personal insult." He would not be concerned about inviting a Chinese child because "if within her acquaintance there were Chinese children, I would feel no anxiety as to her playmates' parents taking offense". The mother checked "no preference" while the father preferred a white person to help with their child. The parents had no preference of race in regard to domestic help.

#### Girl IE

IE was 4 years, 2 months old and had been in the nursery school less than six months. Records show she had lived in two states. The family, including an 11 month old sister, live in a five-room house in a rural community.

IE enjoyed attending Sunday School with her grandmother. At home she played with her sister and a neighbor boy, but many times she preferred to play alone. She had never talked to her parents about Negro or Chinese people, although she had played with Negro and Chinese children when she was about a year old. She had a Negro doll when she was younger, and had heard Negro and Chinese songs. The father has close friends who work with Negroes. At one time a Negro servant was employed in the home.

The parents share in the care of IE. The father and the mother were high school graduates. The father is a chef in a cafe while the mother is a homemaker.

IE entered actively into the task at hand, she was shy but not distrustful. There was little interference from distracting

stimuli. When asked which child she would like to play with, her preferences were the Chinese girl and the Chinese boy. She selected the white girl and the Chinese boy as being like her playmates at nursery school.

Table 6 indicates IE's responses were descriptive and told a story; she also noted boy and girl differences when asked to tell the writer about the three "action" pictures.

Table 6. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	: Comments related to race
White children	"Little girl". "Little flowers".	
Negro children	"Little boys and little girls". "Looks like candy".	
Chinese children	"They are eating" "Glass of milk". "Look here is a little spoon".	

The parents differed slightly in their preferences for racial experiences for their child. The parents would allow IE to sit near and to go to a school with Negro and Chinese children. The father would be willing to invite both Negro and Chinese children to his child's birthday party but the mother would object to inviting a Negro child because, "I don't believe in socially mixing with Negroes although I have no prejudice". The father would prefer a Negro person for domestic help and in

earing for their child but the mother checked no preference.

#### Girl HS

HS was 4 years, 1 month old and had been in the nursery school over a year. She had lived in just one state. The family, including a 11 months old boy, live in an eight-room house in a rural area.

HS has had group experiences with children at the Episcopal Sunday School and has heard about Negro and Chinese people there. There is no child near HS's home for a playmate. HS has seen Chinese people but has never had books or songs about them. A few Negroes have visited in the home and the father has worked with Negroes. HS has never talked to her parents about Negro people, but she has had books and songs about them. At one time a Negro woman worked in the home. There is no regular domestic help; however, college boys act as "baby sitters".

Both parents have Master's degrees. The father is a college faculty member and the mother is a homemaker.

HS was neither distrustful nor self-reliant during the picture presentation. She was easily distracted but returned promptly to the task. When asked with whom she would like to play, her preferences were the white girl and the white boy. She selected the white girl and white boy as being like her playmates at nursery school.

The following table indicates HS's responses were in a story form when asked to tell the writer about the three

"action" pictures.

Table 7. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	: Comments related to race
White children	"No"	
Negro children	"No" "They washing".	
Chinese children	"They're eating". "This boy is really playing".	

These parents agreed in their preferences for racial experiences for their child. These parents would allow their child to sit near or attend a school with Negro and Chinese children. They would invite Negro and Chinese playmates of HS to her birthday party because, "We do not believe in any ethnic segregation". "No preference" was checked when the parents were asked to indicate which nationality they would rather have as domestic and child help, assuming equal ability.

#### Girl MC

MC was 4 years old and had been in the nursery school one and one-half years. She had lived in the same town all her life. The family, including a sister 5 years old, lived in a five-room house in an urban area.

MC had heard about Chinese and Negro people while attending the Christian Sunday School. At home she played with boys

and girls, some younger and some older than she. She had talked to Negro and Chinese children, and had books and songs about them. The mother has friends who work with Negroes. Negro and Chinese people had visited in their home. At one time the family employed Negro domestic help. College students have helped some in the care of MC.

The father is employed as an unskilled laborer but has had two years of college training. The mother is a homemaker and has a college degree.

MC was rather shy and not entirely self-reliant during the picture presentation. She paid little attention to outside stimuli. When asked with whom she would like to play, her preferences were the white girl and white boy. She selected the white girl and the white boy as being like her playmates at nursery school.

The following table indicates MC's responses to be in the enumerative stage and that she also noted boy and girl differences when asked to tell the writer about the three "action" pictures.

Table 8. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	: Comments related to race
White children	"I don't know" "That, that, that".	
Negro children	"I don't know". "That, that, that". "Boy, girl".	
Chinese children	"That, that, that". "I don't know what".	



These parents differed slightly in their preferences for racial experiences for their child. The mother would be willing to sit next to a Negro on a bus, but the father would object. The mother would allow her child to attend school with Negroes, but the father would not. The mother and the father would not invite a Negro child to a birthday party because the mother said, "We have no Negro friends". They wouldn't mind inviting Chinese children, because as the mother stated, "We would be more likely to have Chinese friends". The parents would prefer white domestic help, assuming equal ability. The father would prefer white help with his child and the mother checked "no preference", assuming equal ability.

#### Boy ET

ET was 3 years, 11 months old and had been in the nursery school for one and one-half years. The family live in a three-room apartment in an urban area.

ET enjoyed his group experiences at Sunday School. He had played with boys and girls, some older and some younger than he. ET had a Negro doll and had books and songs about Negro people. ET and his mother had talked about Negroes, and when he visited his grandparents, a Negro servant helped take care of him. ET has seen a Chinese student and he told his mother that "One of my teachers (Chinese) talk funny". The father had worked with Negro and Chinese people.

The parents share in the care of ET. His father is a grad-



uate student at the college and his mother, now a homemaker, had three and one-half years of college training.

ET entered enthusiastically into the task at hand. He was extremely self-confident and assured. He was distracted by his own ideas but returned rather easily to the picture study. He talked incessantly during the picture presentation. His preferences when asked with whom he would like to play were the Negro girl and the white boy. He selected the white girl and the white boy as being like the children he played with at nursery school. Table 9 gives ET's responses which indicate a good story, preference for one of the pictures, and a notation of boy and girl differences.

Table 9. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	: Comments related to race
White children	"Going downstairs to say good night to their Daddy". "Yeh, I know they are". "I think I like this best of all".	
Negro children	"Tell us are washing our hands". "Wash, tell us wash our hands nicely". (Repeated)	
Chinese children	"That tell us we are eating again". "Girl and boy eating".	

The mother and father were in close agreement in indicating their preferences for certain racial experiences for their child.

The parents would allow their child to sit near or attend a school with Negro and Chinese children. They would allow their child to invite a Negro or Chinese child to a birthday party. The father stated, "Playmates are playmates. However, I would try to ascertain the effect upon the child (Negro or Chinese) in question and upon his playmates". The mother said, "I feel there is no need to prejudice a young child against any race". The father and mother checked "no preference" when asked which race they would prefer for domestic and child help, assuming equal ability.

#### Boy IN

IN was 3 years, 10 months old and had been in the nursery school two years. He had lived in one state. The parents and IN live in a four-room apartment in a temporary housing unit for students.

There are eight preschool children in the court where IN lives and he had played with all of them many times. IN had seen Negro and Chinese people, but he had little contact with songs, stories, or records about either race. The family had no regular domestic help, although a student "sitter" came in at times when both parents were to be away.

The parents share in caring for IN. The father is a student in college and the mother is a homemaker and has graduated from high school.

IN was willing but not entirely self-reliant during the

picture presentation. There was little interference from outside stimuli. When asked with whom he would like to play, his preferences were the white girl and the Chinese boy. He selected the white girl and the white boy as being like his playmates at nursery school. The following table indicates IN's responses which showed an awareness of boy and girl differences when asked to tell the writer about the three "action" pictures.

Table 10. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	: Comments related to race
White children	"I like that one". "No".	
Negro children	"I like that one too". "Little boy and girl". "I like that one".	
Chinese children	"I don't". "I don't know". "I like all of them".	

The parents disagreed slightly in their preferences for certain racial experiences for their child. They would allow IN to sit near Negro and Chinese children. The mother would not like him to go to school where there were Negroes; however, the father would not care. The parents would permit their child to invite either a Negro or a Chinese child to a birthday party, and the mother said she "Would not mind having one child (Negro or Chinese) in a group but would not care to have him associate with a whole group". The mother indicated no race preference for

domestic work or with child care but the father would rather have white help.

### Boy DO

DO was 3 years, 9 months old and had been in the nursery school less than a year. He had lived in three states. He and his parents live in a three-room apartment in a temporary housing unit for students.

DO had played in a supervised playground and had two friends who were girls, one was older and one was younger than he. He had a Negro doll and had spoken to Negro children on the street. He has talked to his father about Negro people. The mother had worked with Negro people.

The parents share in caring for DO. The father is a college student. The mother is employed as a cook and has a high school education.

DO entered enthusiastically and with self-confidence into the picture presentation. There was little interference from outside stimuli. When asked with which girl he would like to play, he refused to make a choice saying, "My mother doesn't want me to play with these". He preferred the white boy for a playmate. He refused to select from the pictures a girl who was like his nursery school playmates, but he identified the white boy as being like them. The following table indicates that DO's responses suggested racial awareness when asked to tell the writer about the three "action" pictures.

Table 11. Responses to "action" pictures.

Pictures :	General comments	: Comments related to race
White children	"No".	
Negro children	"Nope". "Nope".	"Black faces".
Chinese children	"I don't know". "Some more black here". (pointing to Chinese boy's hair).	

The parents differed in indicating their preference for certain racial experiences for their child. The mother would not object to her child going to school with Negro or Chinese children, but the father would object, "If the population justified a separate school". The mother would object to inviting Negro and Chinese children to her child's birthday party because, "I don't believe the colored people care to carry on relationships with white people beyond a certain point any more than whites do with colored people". The father would not object in the case of Negroes because "If he liked a Negro child as a playmate, many are as good as a white person", and the father would not object to Chinese because, "Do not actually know any Chinese but am not prejudiced against them". Both mother and father would prefer white domestic and child help.

## DISCUSSION OF DATA

Table 12 summarizes the playmate choices of the 10 children of this study when the pictures of the white, Negro, and Chinese boys and girls were presented with the following question, "Which one would you like to play with?"

Table 12. Playmate preference.

Race	White		Negro		Chinese	
	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl
Child						
UO		x			x	
ME					x	x
IA			x	x		
IC					x	x
IE					x	x
HS	x	x				
MC	x	x				
ET	x			x		
IN		x			x	
DO*	x					

\* Refused girl choice.

When each of the 10 children was given the opportunity to express preference for one boy and one girl for playmates on the basis of the pictures, 8 choices were for white children, 8 choices were for Chinese children, and 3 choices were for Negro children.



Of the 10 children participating in the study, 6 children made at least one choice of a picture of a white child, 5 children made at least one choice of a picture of a Chinese child, and 2 children made at least one choice of a picture of a Negro child. Table 12 also shows that a few children chose both the boy and the girl of the same race for their picture-playmates. Two children made both their choices of a picture of a white child; 3 children made both their choices of a picture of a Chinese child; and, 1 child made both his choices of a picture of a Negro child.

These data suggest that the children participating in the study would like to play equally well with the white or the Chinese children pictured and that they preferred these to the Negro children pictured.

Table 13 summarizes the responses of the 10 children when the pictures of the white, Negro, and Chinese boys and girls were presented and the question asked, "Which one is like the children you play with here at nursery school?"

Table 13. Identification of race similarity.

Race	White		Negro		Chinese	
	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl
Child						
UO	x	x				
ME		x			x	
IA		x			x	
IC	x					x
IE		x			x	
HS	x	x				
MC	x	x				
ET	x	x				
IN	x	x				
DO*	x					

\*Refused girl choice.

When each of the 10 children was given the opportunity to select one boy and one girl picture-playmate as being like the children at nursery school: 15 choices were for the pictures of white children; 4 choices were for the pictures of Chinese children; and, no choices were for the pictures of the Negro children. Of the 10 children participating in the study: 10 made at least one choice of a picture of a white child and only 4 made at least one choice of a picture of a Chinese child. Five children made both choices of the pictures of the white children.

This limited information suggests these children partici-

pating in the study were aware of the difference between the Negro and light skin children pictured and identified themselves with those of a lighter skin color.

In Part III of the picture interpretation series, the "action" pictures were presented to each child and the question asked, "Will you tell me about this picture?" A summary of that data shows no relation between the volume of words used by the child and racial comment.<sup>1</sup> Most of the comments were general and not related to race.

The children varied greatly in their observation of details as indicated by their comments. Five children told a story relative to the action portrayed but with no comment in regard to the race of the children pictured. An example is IE's response "They are eating, Glass of milk, Look, here is a little spoon."<sup>2</sup>

The sex factor as to whether the subjects of the pictures were boys or girls was mentioned by seven children as: IA's response, "I can't read. Boy and a girl".<sup>3</sup>

Two children gave picture preferences of one or more of the "action" pictures, such as, IN's words, "I like that one".<sup>4</sup>

Two children made racial comments about the "action" pictures. One of these suggested a verbal awareness of the Negro's skin color by saying "Black faces" at the time the picture of

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<sup>1</sup> "Large" volume was defined as 10 words or more concerning at least two of the "action" pictures presented. "Little" volume was defined as from one to five words concerning the "action" pictures presented.

<sup>2</sup> Case study, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Case study, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Case study, p. 27.

the Negro children was presented.<sup>1</sup> The remarks made by the other child suggested racial identification. She identified herself and her sister with the white children in the "action" picture by saying, "That's \_\_\_\_\_ (sister) . That's me. Cause that's me".<sup>2</sup> She matched the Negro girls in the "action" picture with the Negro girl portrait. She matched the Chinese girl in the "action" picture with the Chinese girl in the portrait picture. She was incorrect in her attempt to match the Chinese boy in the "action" picture with the Negro boy in the portrait picture.

Table 14 shows the total answers checked on the interview questionnaire that was presented to the parents. The questions were listed under four group headings: equipment used by child, general social experiences, social experiences preferred by parent, and household help (domestic and child care). (In some cases the parent failed to answer either "Yes" or "No".)

The questionnaire revealed that at least 5 of the children had owned dolls, books, and heard songs about Negroes; however, only 2 of the children had owned books and had heard songs about Chinese.

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<sup>1</sup> Case study, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Case study, p. 18.

Table 14. Summary of interview questionnaire.

Questions asked		:No. of		:No. of	
		:fathers	:mothers	:fathers	:mothers
		:answering	:answering	:answering	:answering
		:Yes	:No	:Yes	:No
<b>Equipment</b>					
Does your child have a	Negro doll	5	5	5	5
	Chinese	-	9	-	7
Have you ever checked from	Negroes	2	8	2	8
the library or borrowed	Chinese	1	8	1	8
books for your child about					
Do you own any children's	Negroes	3	6	4	6
books about	Chinese	-	8	2	7
Does your child know or has	Negroes	6	4	4	6
he heard any songs about	Chinese	-	9	3	7
In your home do you play	Negroes	3	5	2	5
phonograph records about	Chinese	1	7	2	4
Do you have a phonograph?		-	2	-	2
<b>General social experiences</b>					
Has your child ever known	Negro	1	9	2	8
a child (to play with or	Chinese	-	10	2	7
talk to) his own age who					
was					
Of the friends that visit	Negroes	2	8	3	7
in your home are any	Chinese	-	10	1	8
Do you have close friends	Negroes	3	7	4	6
or relatives who work with	Chinese	1	9	1	9
Has your child ever talked	Negroes	6	4	4	6
to you about any	Chinese	3	7	2	5
Has your child ever made any	Negroes	1	8	1	9
comments about nursery	Chinese	-	10	2	7
school students or teachers					
who were					

Table 14 (cont.).

Questions asked				:No. of		:No. of	
				:fathers		:mothers	
				:answering		:answering	
				:Yes	:No	:Yes	:No
Has your child ever heard the word							
	M	F	"Nigger"	5	3	5	1
Don't know			"Chink"	-	7	1	3
	N	4	2				
	C	6	3				
	W	6	4				
			"White trash"	-	6	1	3
At Sunday School does your child hear about							
	M	F	Negroes	2	2	2	1
			Chinese	2	2	2	1
Don't know	6	6					
Have you ever tried to obtain reliable information about							
			Negroes	4	5	5	5
			Chinese	4	5	4	5
Has your child ever had an unpleasant experience with							
			Negroes	-	10	-	9
			Chinese	-	10	-	9
Social experiences preferred by parents							
Would you, with your child, sit on a bus next to a							
			Negro	9	1	10	-
			Chinese	10	-	9	-
Would you object to your child going to elementary school with							
			Negroes	2	8	1	9
			Chinese	1	9	-	9
If you were giving your child a birthday party, would you allow your child to invite (age being comparable) a child who is a							
			Negro	5	5	7	3
			Chinese	8	2	9	-
Household help							
Assuming equal ability, which nationality would you rather have help with your child							
			Negro	1	-	-	-
			Chinese	-	-	-	-
	M	F	White	7	-	4	-
No preference	2	5					



Table 14 (concl.).

Questions asked			:No. of		:No. of		
			:fathers		:mothers		
			:answering		:answering		
			:Yes	:No	:Yes	:No	
Assuming equal ability, which nationality would you rather have in your home as domestic help (not with children)							
			Negro	1	-	-	-
			Chinese	-	-	-	-
			White	5	-	5	-
	M	F					
No preference	4	5					
Have you had domestic help which has been			Negro	3	5	5	5
			Chinese	-	7	-	7
			White	4	5	4	4

All of the 10 children in the study had seen Negroes and 3 had talked to Negro children. In 7 families, the adults had contact with Negroes at home, at work, or through friends; 7 children had talked to one or both parents about Negroes. Of the 10 children in the study, 8 children had seen Chinese people and 2 of those children had talked to Chinese children. In 2 families, adults had some contact with Chinese people at work, or through friends. Three of the children in the study had talked to one or both parents about Chinese.

In one family there was objection expressed to sitting with their child next to a Negro on a bus. One or both parents in 3 families would object to their child being in school with Negro children. One or both parents of 6 children would object to inviting a Negro child into their home for their child's birthday party. In no case was there an objection raised to sitting next to a Chinese person on a bus; however, one parent would object

to his child being in a school attended by Chinese children. One or both parents of 2 children would object to inviting a Chinese child into their home for their child's birthday party.

There had been Negro household help in 5 of the homes and white household help in 4 of the homes. At least one of the parents in 6 families preferred white household help, assuming equal ability. In one home the father preferred Negro household help, assuming equal ability. No family had ever had Chinese household help and did not care to have, providing they could get either white or Negro household help of equal ability.

Factual questions were not always answered the same by both parents. In many cases only one parent had been in a position to observe or hear some of the information requested, and in other cases one parent appeared to have forgotten certain incidents. It is to be expected and it was observed that in some cases a father and a mother differ slightly in the experiences they preferred their child to have.

The two children who expressed verbal awareness of race had little or no experiences with the Negro or Chinese race.

Two children chose the white child's picture when given a chance to select playmates and children similar to their nursery school playmates by means of the picture interpretation series. The fathers of these two children differed greatly in the experiences they preferred for their children. One father was the only parent who expressed a wish that his child could have the opportunity to play with children of the Negro, Chinese and other

racess. The other father was the only parent who would not allow his child to sit on a bus next to a Negro. He also was the parent of the child discussed in the introduction as not wanting to eat with a "black teacher".

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The age of the 10 children participating in the study ranged from 3 years, 9 months to 4 years, 3 months. Six of the 10 children had seen Negroes and 8 of them had seen Chinese. All of the parents of these children had seen Negro and Chinese people.

One or both parents of 6 of the children participating in the study would not allow their child to invite a Negro to a birthday party given in the home, and one parent of 2 children would not invite a Chinese child to a birthday party.

All of the children in this limited study gave some suggestion of awareness of the difference between the light colored children and the dark colored children pictures; 8 children showed playmate preference for the light colored children pictured and 2 children showed verbal identification with races pictured.

Results of the picture interpretation series suggest (1) that these children preferred to play with the lighter skinned children, and (2) that the children in the study were aware that their nursery school playmates were similar to the white children's pictures. In no case did any child participating in the study by word or action express prejudice against the pictures

presented. However, parental prejudice was indicated by some of the responses.

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## APPENDIX



FIG. 1. Picture Series A<sub>1</sub>.



Fig. 2. Picture Series A<sub>2</sub>.



Fig. 3. Picture Set B<sub>1</sub>.



FIG. 4. Picture Set B<sub>2</sub>.





Fig. 5. Picture Set B<sub>3</sub>.



## Form 2. Adult Questionnaire

The purpose of the following questionnaire is to study the experiences which a selected group of preschool children have had with Negro and Chinese people. Will you check or fill in the answer that most nearly expresses your own situation?

1. In how many states has your child lived \_\_\_\_\_

List them:

2. Does your child have a

Negro doll Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese doll Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you own any children's books about

Negroes Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ List titles below:

Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ List titles below:

4. Have you ever checked from the library or borrowed books for your child about

Negroes Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does your child know or has he heard any songs about

Negroes Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

6. In your home do you play phonograph records about

Negroes Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

7. At Sunday school does your child hear about

Negroes Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you ever tried to obtain reliable information about

Negroes Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

9. How old was your child when he first saw a

Negro age \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese age \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

10. How old were you when you first saw a

Negro age \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese age \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

11. Would you, with your child, sit on a bus next to a

Negro Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

12. Would you object to your child going to elementary school with

Negro children Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese children Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

13. If you were giving your child a birthday party would you allow your child to invite (age being comparable) a child who is a

Negro Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Why?

Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Why?

14. Of the friends that visit in your home are any

Negroes Frequently \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese Frequently \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you have close friends or relatives that work with

Negro people Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese people Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

16. Have you had domestic help which has been

Negro Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 White Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

17. Assuming equal ability, which nationality would you rather have in your home as domestic help (not with children)

Negro \_\_\_\_\_ Chinese \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ No preference \_\_\_\_\_

18. Assuming equal ability, which nationality would you rather have help with your child

Negro \_\_\_\_\_ Chinese \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ No preference \_\_\_\_\_

19. Has your child ever talked to you about any

Negro people Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Chinese people Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

20. Has your child ever known a child (to play with or talk to) his own age who was

Negro Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

21. Has your child ever made any comments about nursery school students or teachers who were

Negro Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Can you describe the situation or the statement as your child told it to you?

Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Can you describe the situation or the statement as your child told it to you?

22. Has your child ever heard the word

"Nigger" Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

"Chink" Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

"White trash" Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

23. Has your child ever had an unpleasant experience with

Negroes Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Describe:

Chinese Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Describe: