Including Diverse Groups in Education

A summary of the scientific literature on the inclusion of diverse groups in school settings.



How This Impacts Children's Development

Millions of children worldwide struggle because of prejudice and discrimination due to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, indigenous background, and age. Specifically, Latinx children experience

disparities in educational access and attainment.

READ THE BRIEF: transforming policy standards to promote equity and developmental success among latinx children and youth, 2022

READ THE BRIEF: amicus brief, bonnie peltier v. charter day school, inc. on gender based policies in schools, 2020

READ THE BRIEF: changing demographics of dual language learners and english learners: implications for school success, 2018

READ THE BRIEF: highlighting the positive development of minority children, 2013

READ THE BRIEF: ensuring that multilingual children benefit from best practices, 2013

READ THE BRIEF: reducing prejudice and promoting equity in childhood, 2011

READ THE BRIEF: making schools safe for sexual-minority and all students, 2010

READ THE BRIEF: young hispanic children: boosting opportunities for learning, 2009

READ THE BRIEF: improving prejudice-reduction programs in schools: lessons learned since brown v. board or education, 2007

Talking Points from the SRCD Briefs

- Research suggests children may have inherent prejudices, an often-overlooked factor that complicates efforts to address discrimination.
- Racially homogeneous schools limit opportunities for children to learn from peers of other races, and even multi-ethnic schools may not create the best environment for cross-group relations; school context—including racial composition, teacher attitudes, and policies—plays a key role.
- Many youths experience discrimination, with studies showing that 75% of African American and 65% of Hispanic adolescents report being harassed due to their race or ethnicity. Despite this, minority children often grow up in supportive families with a strong ethnic identity and social competence.
- For young Hispanics to succeed academically, strong English skills are essential. Multilingual children, often from low-income immigrant families, can perform as well as monolingual children if supported in learning both languages.
- Children recognize discrimination before adolescence, and changing their attitudes requires fostering positive peer interactions and contact with outgroup members. Early discrimination experiences often contribute to adult prejudice.

Policy Considerations in the Briefs

1. Cooperative learning and bias-free curricula may be more effective than multicultural curricula, especially for younger children who struggle with stereotypes; older children may benefit from curricula that model positive behavior with different racial groups.
2. Education departments should collect data on students' race/ethnicity, household income, language, and immigration status to monitor academic progress and assess the effectiveness of policies and programs.
3. Federal and state governments should develop school safety laws that specifically enumerate, or list, sexual-minority students as protected.
4. Encourage parents and caregivers to speak with children in the language that comes most naturally, which will result in a richer and more diverse language environment for children.
5. Develop and implement programs that expose children to high-quality input in English in the early years while at the same time supporting formal and informal opportunities for children to continue to develop competency in their home language(s).

READ THE BRIEF: transforming policy standards to promote equity and developmental success among latinx children and youth, 2022

READ THE BRIEF: amicus brief, bonnie peltier v. charter day school, inc. on gender based policies in schools, 2020

READ THE BRIEF: changing demographics of dual language learners and english learners: implications for school success, 2018

READ THE BRIEF: highlighting the positive development of minority children, 2013

READ THE BRIEF: ensuring that multilingual children benefit from best practices, 2013

READ THE BRIEF: reducing prejudice and promoting equity in childhood, 2011

READ THE BRIEF: making schools safe for sexual-minority and all students, 2010

READ THE BRIEF: young hispanic children: boosting opportunities for learning, 2009

READ THE BRIEF: improving prejudice-reduction programs in schools: lessons learned since brown v. board or education, 2007