SRCD Anti-Racism Task Force Full Final Report

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SRCD Anti-Racism Task Force Full Report, April 2024

Why SRCD Needs Anti-Racism Principles

In 2023, members of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) were appointed to the expanded Anti-Racism Task Force. Charged with ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion are embedded in the Society. One of the primary goals of the Anti-Racism Task Force centered around creating a shared language and a fundamental understanding of what constitutes anti-racist science and how we can value and enforce anti-racist principles and practices within the Society.

SRCD exists to support high-quality, policy-relevant research that advances our understanding of the healthy development of all children. And yet, the field of psychological science, including

developmental science, has a long history of doing harm, and of perpetuating racism and racial oppression in the lives of children and families around the globe (Cummings Center for the History of Psychology, 2021; Guthrie, 2004; Rutherford, 2020; Winston, 2020). An historical lens unveils the long arc of racism in science, but we know racism, dehumanization, and harm are not relegated to the past (Buchanan et al., 2021; Roberts et al., 2020; Rogers et al., in press). Racism persists in our theories, methods, and interpretations. White normativity - a colonial, American, patriarchal capitalism - is the default setting in mainstream psychology and developmental science (Roberts & Mortenson, 2023; Spencer, 1995; Sue, 2006). This overarching ideological systems filters into every aspect (and subfield) of our science, guiding the populations we study, the questions we ask, which topics are deemed legitimate, and the methodologies we use to study them; shaping who and what is deemed *normal* and *healthy* and who and what needs to be *fixed* (e.g., intervening to teach low-income parents how to speak to their children) and how findings are interpreted (e.g., comparative studies that use individual and deficit perspectives to interpret differences between youth of color and white youth); and determining who is viewed as an expert, who has decision making power for what is investigated or published (e.g. editorial boards, scientific review panels), and which scholars have access to inner academic circles (Rogers et al., 2023; Settles et al., 2021; Teo, 2010).

As an organizing body, SRCD has an obligation to account for and rectify the proliferation of harm caused by white supremacy. Disrupting entrenched racism requires intentionality. This is the purpose of setting Anti-Racism Principles to serve as guidelines and accountability metrics that can steer our discipline toward serving the development of *all* children and families.

Anti-Racist research "involves understanding and situating racism within societal systems and policies and conducting research that aims to challenge and eradicate racism" (Wray-Lake et al., 2022, p. 1286). In acknowledging the history of racism in developmental science and our pursuit to address its impact on the lives of children and their families, we assert that everyone (e.g., educators, researchers, clinicians, policy makers, leadership) shares the responsibility of creating an anti-racist society. Members of the society who explicitly study issues of race, ethnicity and racism often hold the burden to rectify the wrongs of racism. However, anti-racism is the work of every developmental scientist, especially those who have social power due to their proximity to and/or alignment with whiteness. **Anti-Racism is pertinent to the whole field of developmental science** - not just to scholars of color or scholars studying minoritized children

and families and/or the issues that are most pertinent to minoritized communities. Every subdiscipline, area of study, methodology, and approach must reckon with the persistence of racism (Buchanan et al., 2021; Rogers et al., in press).

Our Anti-Racism Principles affirm an explicit stance for liberation, for the right of all people to grow and thrive and live free from oppression. These principles set a foundation for humanity and accountability in developmental science. As scientists, we have an obligation to protect, preserve, and promote the health and humanity of *all* children, families, and communities.

Setting the Stage

Anti-Racism is a Global Project

The SRCD Anti-Racism Principles make explicit our accountability for identifying and dismantling the caste systems of privilege and oppression that impact the lives of children, families, communities, and social systems that serve them across the globe. Although our anti-racism principles focus on race as it is constructed and structured in the U.S., they address the more foundational caste ideologies that perpetuate oppression and privilege globally. Race is socially, historically, and politically constructed and geographically situated. Racial groups are neither fixed nor static across time and space and thus the specificities and particularities of anti-racism principles are dynamic. However, the underlying structure of Caste systems, of which race is an example (Wilkerson, 2020), position groups of individuals within a given society/system/politic/nation as superior to and dominant over specific others who are then constructed as inferior and subordinate; such caste structure is universal and is the structure that we aim to dismantle. Similarly, Christian (2019) argues that "global white supremacy" operates broadly, "shaping all geographies and national radicalized social systems but in different, nuanced, and indirect forms" (p. 170). In this way, the structure of racism is "malleable" in that white supremacy persists even in the absence of white bodies – and similarly that anti-Blackness flourishes absent Black bodies (Christian, 2019, p. 170). Thus, a nation does

not need to be ruled or dominantly represented by "white people" to esteem *whiteness,* "white economic, political, and cultural power", nor does it need the presence of "Black people" to demonize, distrust, and disenfranchise *Blackness*; the disdain for Blackness as inferior and the elevation of whiteness as superior is global (Christian, 2019).

Capitalization Choices

The decision to capitalize or not to capitalize when naming racial groups is political and dynamic with discordant perspectives and opinions in all directions (Associated Press, 2020; Ewing, 2020). For the purposes of this document and our alignment with anti-racism we hold that intentionality and specificity of language is essential. In our writing about race and racism and anti-racism we capitalize racial and ethnic and cultural groups that are politically and structurally marginalized relative to the dominant norm, for example, Black, Asian, Latinx, Chinese, Indigenous, but we do not capitalize "white" or its iterations - "white supremacy", "whiteness", "white supremacy." This decision is threefold.

- First, for decades the refusal to capitalize Black, specifically, in standard English and publishing guidelines was a tool of delegitimization – a strategy to hold Blackness as unrecognized and invalid and thus the intentionality to capitalize Black with referencing Black people and communities is an effort to claim space as a "proper" group to be named and seen.
- Second, racial/ethnic/cultural identity for minoritized groups is a source of community and shared experience, a sense of belonging afforded through group identification. As such, the empowerment of collective identity that is afforded to minoritized groups is underscored in the capitalization. For white people and dominant group members, race/ethnic/cultural identity is not necessary to navigate shared oppression but rather represents a collective effort to amass personal privilege and power over others.
- Third, the capitalization of "white" has been used intentionally and explicitly by alt-right and white supremacist groups to reinforce the contrived dominance and superiority of whiteness and white people. Denoting white with lowercase is a strategy to resist alignment with oppressive language.

A final note: Our reference to and naming of race and racial groups is necessarily flawed as there is significant variability within and across any "racial group" specifically at the micro-level of

individual identities and subjective experiences. Thus, our intention is not to apply our labels and capitalization choices to others or ascribe the subjective meaning of racial labels to others but rather to leverage the macro-level realities of the racial system to speak about the caste structures that racialize and stratify people according to the constructed racial categories.

Defining Racism and Anti-Racism

Racism is, according to James Jones (social psychologist), "the exercise of power against a racial group defined as inferior by individuals and institutions with the intentional or unintentional support of the entire culture" (1972, p. 117). Of note, only members of the dominant group (e.g., white individuals) or those who exist within and benefit from the dominant cultural beliefs of whiteness, and who hold the power to define racialized others as inferior can engage in racism. Racism does not operate in "both" directions; it flows unidirectionally downward from the source of power in society – defined here as colonial, patriarchal white supremacy (Harrell, 2000). As members of a society committed to understanding child development, the system of racism is pertinent to our discipline and every aspect of the human experience (Rogers et al., 2021).

Racism is often considered individual (interpersonal) thoughts, beliefs, and practices. However, **racism is a complex system of racial hierarchies and inequities,** in which the social position of one's race and ethnicity might produce differential effects of racism. Therefore, we must consider the structures and systems that look beyond the individual and toward how norms, policies, practices, and individuals participate in and uphold broader dynamics of racism.

There are multiple levels in which racism is enacted, including:

Individual racism, commonly known as racial discrimination or interpersonal racism, refers to beliefs in the superiority of one's race and is characterized by "behavioral enactments" between individuals that maintain a power differential between racial groups (e.g., Jones, 1972).

Institutional racism refers to racial inequity within institutions and systems of power and refers to laws, customs, and practices that restrict or deny access to the same rights and opportunities promised to all citizens (e.g., segregation, incarceration; Jones, 1972).

Cultural racism reflects an intergenerational world view characterized by beliefs in the superiority of one group over another that is ingrained in "institutions, ideological beliefs, and everyday actions of people in the culture" (e.g., omission of contributions of people of color in educational materials, negative stereotypical representation in media; Jones, 1972).

Structural racism has cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color (Brown, 2017; Collins, 1986). Structural racism refers to "the totality of ways in which societies foster [racial] discrimination, via mutually reinforcing [inequitable] systems (e.g., in housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, criminal justice, etc.) that in turn reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and distribution of resources", and is reflected in history, culture, and interconnected institutions (Bailey et al., 2017p. 1454).

Internalized racism can involve believing in negative messages about oneself or one's racial group (Collins, 1986; Jones, 2023) and refers to acceptance of the negative messages and stereotypes about their own abilities and intrinsic worth as tied to race; accepting limitations to one's full humanity; embracing whiteness (e.g., skin bleaching, colorism), self-devaluation (e.g., rejection of ancestral culture), and resignation, hopelessness, and helplessness (Brown, 2017). Internalized racism can also involve internalized privilege among white people including feeling a sense of superiority and entitlement, or holding negative beliefs about people of color (Helms, 2017; Rogers et al., 2021)

Anti-Racism is the intentional acknowledgment of and explicit resistance to all forms of racism. It includes a critical understanding of racism, whiteness, and white privilege, and consistent behaviors that challenge, disrupt, and dismantle racism founded on white supremacy that is more than one-off behaviors but instead a continuous process of change to eradicate racism on multiple levels (Aldana et al., 2019; Bañales & Rivas-Drake, 2022).

SRCD Anti-Racism Principles

Overarching Principle: SRCD commits to implementing anti-racism principles, practices, and policies to create a developmental science that affirms and is inclusive of the full range of human experiences and epistemologies, or ways of viewing the world and understanding truth. Anti-racism is a practice in humanization – seeing ourselves and others as fully human, respecting the dignity and full humanity of all people. SRCD commits to accountability of these efforts through self-monitoring, transparency, evaluation, reflection, and adaptation. This commitment is guided by the following specific principles:

- **Specific Principle 1:** Anti-racist science requires that researchers who have benefited from the power of whiteness in academia do the work necessary to improve their skills in order to conduct research that does not harm and/or contribute to the marginalization of racialized communities. This applies to scholars regardless of domain and is not limited to those focused on children from racialized groups and/or focused on topics related to race or racism.

- **Specific Principle 2:** Anti-racist science requires policies and practices that systematically elevate the voices, perspectives, and expertise of scholars who have been historically underrepresented and marginalized in academia, so that the strengths of racialized cultures and communities are recognized and that members of these communities are integrated as critical partners in the advancement of developmental science.

- **Specific Principle 3:** Anti-racist science requires training scientists at the undergraduate and graduate levels in anti-racist principles, policies, and practices that acknowledge the diversity of methodologies and epistemologies and inherent responsibility for scientific impact. Anti-racist science will be evident in how we teach, mentor, and advise trainees in research, the content of research training, and the milestones, timelines, and indicators of successful research.

SRCD will uphold anti-racist principles through the implementation of anti-racist policies and practices with clear accountability structures.

A Guide Toward Anti-Racism Accountability and Implementation

Drawing on research across a range of relevant disciplines, the Task Force identified how we can promote an anti-racist developmental science, as well as the potential challenges and barriers to continued efforts toward this goal. From this process, we conceptualized an outline of foundational action items regarding the responsibilities of the Society and its members in working toward producing anti-racist developmental science. The scope of this work necessitates intentional and persistent ongoing work of anti-racism by the Society and its members. Therefore, we recommend the Implementation Committee take additional time to review the responsibilities which we offer as a starting point.

In terms of general guidance toward implementation, we consider with whom and where these responsibilities lie. As articulated in the scope of these responsibilities, it is evident to us that this is an ongoing and Society-wide effort, which includes the efforts of the Society's executive staff and personnel, its leadership, and its membership. As such, we make several recommendations about who holds the responsibility of ensuring an anti-racist Society and developmental science, as well as how we might engage in this work. We recognize the limitation of siloing "anti-racism" as a separate committee or task force and advocate that anti-racism is everyone's responsibility. That said, we also recognize that holding *everyone* as responsible for anti-racism may indeed mean that *nobody* is responsible. Thus, we strongly advocate for a both/and ideology and approach; for example, every committee and governing council within the Society is accountable for anti-racism and will have an "anti-racism representative" to ensure there is continued focus on anti-racist science both within and between groups at the Society. Additionally, while the responsibilities outlined here lie within the Society, the impact of anti-racist developmental science is far-reaching and so we recommend working alongside racialized communities in an effort to advocate for the needs of the broader society. Thus, our metric for meeting the standards of anti-racism in the Society should be perceptible not only to those on the inside but the outside as well.

Responsibilities of the Society

Amplify the voices of and research conducted by marginalized scholars and with racialized communities

- Fund community-based research efforts, partnership development, and sustainability measures
- Institute funding and collaboration structures to increase collaboration between researchers, disciplines, colleges, and communities
- Develop metrics of assessment that actively reject the longstanding history of epistemic exclusion and marginalization in review, publication, and presentation

Advocate for anti-racist policies and accountability

- Develop (collaboratively with stakeholders and community) and advocate for anti-racist organizational policies to improve human lives (organizational and external)
- Develop (collaboratively with stake holders and community) and advocate for polices and programs that diversify that workforce (organizational and external)
- Hold leadership and members of the society accountable for practicing and embodying anti-racism
- Fund and routinely assess anti-racism efforts and accountability (e.g., equity audits)

Create opportunities to recognize diverse scholarship, leadership, and partnerships

- Recruit racially diverse leadership (e.g., biennial/special topic meeting program chairs, invited speakers, and workshop leaders; webinar presenters; journal editor and staff positions; reviewers for journal, conference, grant, awards, and scholarship submissions)
- Involve community members in the evaluation and presentation of research (e.g., for publication, conference presentation as advisory board members)
- Prioritize partnerships and community-centered knowledge to advance anti-racism
- Institute funding and collaboration structures to increase collaboration between researchers, disciplines, colleges, and communities

Responsibilities of Researchers

Create diverse research teams and community partnerships

- Include community members, youth, partners in the research process and as core contributors to the research team
- Build partnerships with racialized communities to conduct research
  - Involve community members in all aspects of the research process
  - Establish guidelines for research partnerships
  - Develop plans for dissemination beyond traditional academic avenues

Reflect on and assess our own roles in elevating the voices of marginalized researchers and/or conducting research with racialized communities

- Acknowledge and reckon with the power hierarchy between researchers and participants
  - For white researchers, continual reflection on positionality and power is needed; for example, including reflexivity statements as standard research practice.
- Embody humility by recognizing the intersectional gradations of insider-outsider status when working with racialized communities
- Prioritize actions needed to address power dynamics throughout the research process

Shared Responsibilities of the Society and Researchers

Epistemic Equity in theories

- Acknowledge the epistemic foundations of science, critique and resist epistemic oppression and violence, and actively embrace, prioritize, and utilize diverse ways of knowing
- Draw on theories that center the impacts of and resistance to systems of oppression and inequality (e.g., intersectionality theory, critical theories)
- Frame research around resistance and conduct solutions-oriented research that aims to dismantle racism (avoid an overfocus on the harms of racism)
- Shift from deficit-based and individual-focused approaches to systems-based framing where the "problem" and solution are situated within societal structures and systems and use systems-centered language

Epistemic equity in study samples

- Recruit samples that represent the full diversity of human beings
- Assume and attend to the heterogeneity within racial and ethnic groups, including explicit intentionality to the intersectionality of positionalities within systems and structures of power, oppression, and privilege
- Describe and justify the racial demographics of samples, reflecting on the lived experiences represented in the sample, and consider the generalizability of study findings and/or value of within group analysis

Epistemic equity in research design & analysis

- Utilize research designs that involve racialized communities and amplify their voices (e.g., community-based participatory research, mixed-methods approaches)
- Recognize the value of within-group designs
- Conduct person-centered versus variable-centered analyses
- Do not use race as a control or moderator variable. Race-comparative designs must be clearly justified
- Take responsibility for data interpretation and implications of research findings

Transform the training and education of emerging scholars

- Explicit teaching in the history of psychology and developmental science
- Philosophy of science and epistemologies; Historicizing, contextualizing, and humanizing the scientific process
- Mentoring and mentorship model and advocacy
- Diverse, multi-method, anti-racist training in research methods, design, and analysis
- Access to diverse research samples, research teams, interdisciplinary perspectives

Key Terms and Definitions

1. **Anti-racism:** Encompasses an understanding of racism, whiteness, and white privilege and their ubiquity in our societies (Helms, 2017). Antiracist behaviors include white individuals learning about racism and white privilege, in society and in their lives, serving as allies to non-white populations, and actively working to eradicate individual, institutional, and structural racism (Aldana et al., 2019; Bañales & Rivas-Drake, 2022;

Kordesh et al., 2013).

2. **Colorism:** A global structure of white supremacy, whereby privilege and oppression are tied to the lightness (whiteness) and darkness (Blackness) of skin complexion (Blay, 2021; Burton et al., 2010; Christian, 2019). Colorism is multidimensional and intersectional, classifying hair texture, facial features, body size/shape as well as education, income, and codes of speech on a spectrum of proximity to lightness (goodness, whiteness, privilege) to darkness (badness, blackness, oppression; e.g., Blay, 2021; Dixon & Telles, 2017; Mendez-Escobar, 2023).

3. **Culture:** A continuously changing system made up of "practices of social communities [e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status] and an interpretation of those practices" by way of language (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). Culture describes "the characteristic attitudes and behaviors of a particular group within society, such as a profession, social class, or age group" (APA, 2024).

4. **Ethnicity/ethnic groups:** Sociocultural categories or labels used to define group membership based on national origin, tradition, beliefs, cultural practices, and language (Mendez-Escobar, 2023). Ethnicity is related to and distinct from race; whereas race categorizes based on physical characteristics and the uneven balance of power, ethnicity may or not explicitly embed a power differential. There is no consensus about how to parse the two in developmental processes; some scholars use ethnicity and race interchangeably (e.g., Rivas-Drake et al., 2014), while other scholars underscore differences between the terms (Cokley, 2007; Helms, 2007). *Related to: Culture*

5. **Inequity:** Inequity includes systematic differences in an outcome of different population groups caused by structural, systemic, societal, economic factors (Boyd et al., 2023). Inequities result from unjust structural conditions that unfairly benefit a privileged social group while imposing multiple oppressive conditions and barriers on one or more minoritized and thus marginalized groups" (Boyd et al., 2023; p. 579).

6. **Intersectionality:** A framework for conceptualizing the ways societal systems of privilege and oppression shape how individuals are perceived and treated by others (Anderson & Collins, 2013). Structural systems of privilege and oppression such as race, gender, social

class, ability, sexuality, language, and more are overlapping and mutually constitutive systems rather than singular or independent systems (Anderson & Collins, 2013; Crenshaw, 1989), and this impacts how individuals' experiences are shaped within and across relationships, systems, policies, and institutions.

7. **Power:** Power refers to possessing control or influence over others and the ability to cause an outcome (Jones, 1997, 2023). Power operates at multiple levels -- individual, institutional, structural. For example, individuals wield control within institutions to create institutional power, while institutions wield control to create structural power, impacting the experiences and opportunities of marginalized individuals (Jones, 1997, 2023).

8. **Race & Racialization**: Race is a social and political–not a biological–construct; there is no genetic basis for race or racial categories (Omi & Winant, 2014). As a sociopolitical concept, race is imbued with power, and creates a hierarchy that stratifies people into positions of privilege and oppression based on racial categorization (Omi & Winant, 2014; Wilkerson, 2020). Racialization is the process by which race informs social systems and interactions; it is "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group" (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 111). That is, people and groups are *racialized* into a racial system.

9. **Racial discrimination:** Occurs when people or institutions treat people from racial groups differently or unjustly, with or without intent, and this difference results in inequitable access to opportunities and resources (Williams et al., 2019).

10. **Racial hierarchies:** A sociopolitical system that assigns value to racial categories and racial groups (e.g., Wilkerson, 2020). The racial hierarchy reflects the enduring legacy of white settler colonialism and centuries of white supremacist pseudoscience, including in psychology, which situated white men as fully human – and inherently superior – and Black and Indigenous peoples as "less than human" – and thus inherently inferior (APA, 2024; Kwon & Kposowa, 2017).

11. **Racial prejudice:** Includes negative attitudes toward people or groups based on a racial category; it is a comparative process in which the individual's group is the positive point of reference (Jones, 1997, 2023). Non-white individuals (e.g., Black, Latinx, Asian, Native

American) can be racially prejudicial, whereas only white individuals can be racist because of structural power (Jones, 2023).

12. **Racism**: Racism is "a system of dominance, power and privilege based on racial group designations" (Harrell, 2000, p. 43). Racism is the combination of both racial prejudice and power, involving both social systems and individuals.

13. **Whiteness:** Includes the racialized legal, structural, and ideological beliefs, behaviors, and systems that center white people as normative and superior (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Leonardo, 2004; Miller, 2022). Whiteness is the embodiment of white supremacy, and one of the ways it is carried across generations and embedded in micro (interpersonal, identity, attitudes) and macro (laws, institutions, policies) processes.

14. **White privilege:** Refers to "the notion that white subjects accrue advantages by virtue of being constructed as white" (Leonardo, 2004, p. 137), which includes unearned physical, financial, and psycho-social advantages. White privilege is neither passive nor faultless; it is an active project and direct product of white supremacy, involving the "direct processes that secure domination [for white people] and the privileges associated with it" (Leonardo, 2004, p. 137).

15. **White supremacy:** White supremacy is a deeply rooted system of political, economic, and sociocultural power and control that anchors white people as the unquestioned leaders and beneficiaries and white ways of doing, being, and thinking as normative and natural (Bonds, 2020; hooks, 1992). White supremacy is not limited to white people; indeed, it is a global project instantiated in systems, policies, ideologies, and economics that operate even in the absence of white bodies (Christian, 2019).

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