THE RESEARCH – WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Early childhood is a critical window for racial identity and racial bias formation
• Babies as young as 6 months stare longer at a face from a racial group different than their own. (Phyllis Katz, 2000-2010)
• Children as young as 3 make distinctions based on race, even when race is not discussed (Phyllis Katz, 2000-2010) and start to prefer and ascribe positive attributes to their own racial group more often (Rebecca Bigler, 1993)
• By age 5, children see race as a major point of difference or distinction, even when it is not discussed. (Phyllis Katz, 2000-2010)
• By age 7, children can accurately reflect social status bias and will make choices or judgments based on who they perceive as having more power or privilege. (Bigler, Averhart, & Liben, 2003)
• White children as young as 7 demonstrate that they believe blacks experience less pain than whites. (Rebecca Dore, 2014)

YET...
• Research on family habits indicates that parents of color are three time more likely to discuss race with their children than white parents. The majority of white families never or almost never talk about race at home. (Brown, Tony N., Emily E. Tanner-Smith, Chase L. Lesane-Brown, and Michael E. Ezell, 2007)
• When we don't talk about race with our kids, they fill in the blanks, extrapolating from an often inequitable and segregated existence filled with racial messages. (Phyllis Katz, 2000-2010) (Brigitte Vittrup, 2006)
• One study showed that when white children of white parents (who intentionally enrolled in a study about children’s racial attitudes) were asked “Do your parents like black people?” 14 percent said “no, they don’t,” and 38 percent said “I don’t know.” Almost 90 percent of the enrolled parents were very reluctant or refused to talk directly about race with their children. (Brigitte Vittrup, 2006)

AND...
• Even when kids are told that people are all the same, white kids continue to demonstrate stronger racial biases than children of other groups. (Schutts & Olsen, 2011)
• Contrary to popular belief, Millennials only have minimally less stated racial bias than the generations ahead of them. (Sean McElwee, 2012)
• Despite good intentions, whites that avoid talking about race in mixed racial company often appear more suspicious to people of color. (Michael Norton, 2006)

We know how to decrease prejudice.

STUDIES ALSO SHOW THAT:
• Explicit conversation about race improves racial attitudes across groups (Rebecca Bigler, 1995-2010)
• Teaching about the country’s history of bias and discrimination is the most effective technique for decreasing bias (Hughes, Bigler & Levy, 2007)
• Conversations with less-prejudiced individuals is likely to lower one’s own bias (Aboud & Doyle, 1996)
• Even slightly more exposure to other racial groups, even through children’s books, helps to counteract bias and discrimination (Crisp & Turner, 2009) (Krista Aronson, 2014)