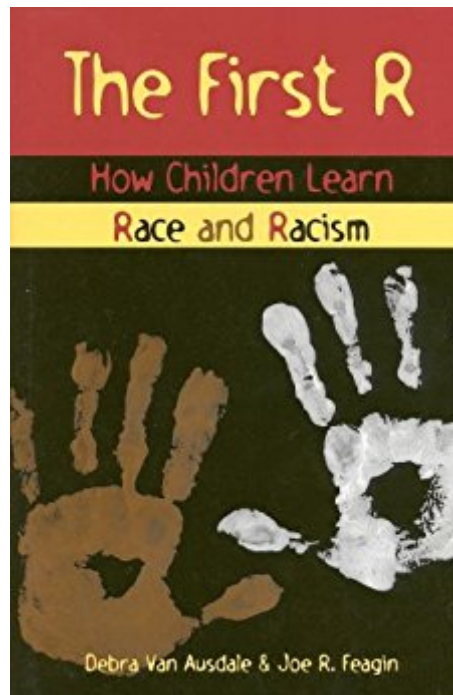# The First R: How Children Learn Race And Racism

Synopsis

This study looks into how children learn about the 'first R'â "raceâ "and challenges the current assumptions with case-study examples from three child-care centers.Parents and teachers will find this remarkable study reveals that the answer to how children learn about race might be more startling than could be imagined.

Book Information

File Size: 846 KB

Print Length: 240 pages

Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (December 11, 2001)

Publication Date: July 19, 2013

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00E2Q7A5Q

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #151,931 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store)   #4 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Sociology > Race Relations   #18 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Race Relations > General   #29 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Parenting & Relationships > Parenting > Babies & Toddlers > Child Development

Customer Reviews

The premise of the study done by Van Ausdale and Feagin was that from an early age children conceptualize race and racial identity. Their suggestion is that from a very early age, people's perceptions of race and ethnicity become impregnated into their psyche. Through various social exchanges children learn and regurgitate what is learned. These perceptions can be developed from any area of social interaction.Throughout history it has been thought that children were not active participants in any of these spheres. It had been thought that children were imitators of adult and are the initial recipients of these ideas and perceptions. Van Ausdale counter these popular conceptions about children and how they acquire information. The study, which seeks to show that

children actively form and interpret concepts of race at very early ages, used 58 children from the ages of three to six as subjects. Through their work the authors emphasize the social space (the daycare) as a microcosm of America's racial pecking order. Chapter one the authors give a literature review of child development theory thoroughly examining the pros and cons of these theories as they relate to children's acquisition of race. The author's challenge how these theories fail to delve into how children learn and perpetuate social constructs. An area of primary concern is the fact these theories take responsibility away from the children.The author introduces a concept called "adult-centered" orientation, which is a research technique that rules out any serious cognitive qualities in children. It merely looks at children as adults with deficits, and lacking the realist ability to be engaging in abstract concepts such as race, class and ethnicity.

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