

Mexican American Children's Ethnic Pride and Internalized Racism

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes results from interviews with Mexican American children in grades 2-12 and from interviews with their parents about their developmental model (ethnic perspective-talking ability). It focuses on children's responses to questions about ethnic pride (why someone would not like being Mexican American) and internalized racism (why they like being Mexican American). The research suggested four developmental levels in their responses to these questions (physical, literal, social, and group perspectives). At Level 0, the Physicalistic and Observable Perspective of Ethnicity, there is an awareness of race, but not of the nonobservable characteristics associated with ethnicity. At Level 1, the Literal Perspective of Ethnicity, there is a beginning understanding of some of the relatively permanent, nonobservable aspects of ethnicity and a conception of the heritage or ancestry components of ethnicity. At Level 2, the Nonliteral and Social Perspective of Ethnicity, comes an awareness of subtle aspects associated with ethnicity and integration of everyday, mundane social experiences related to ethnicity and awareness of ethnic prejudice. Level 3, the Group Perspective of Ethnicity, has an awareness of the impact of pervasive experiential influences associated with ethnicity and ethnic group consciousness.