

**THE INTERSECTION OF RACE AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS (SES) IN EARLY
FAMILY LIFE: WHY DO THE ACADEMIC RETURNS TO SES DIFFER FOR BLACK
AND WHITE CHILDREN?**

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Daphne A. Henry

Bachelor of Arts, University of Pittsburgh, 2009

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This dissertation was presented

by

Daphne A. Henry

It was defended on

December 13, 2017

and approved by

Heather J. Bachman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Applied Developmental Psychology Program

Celia Brownell, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Psychology

Waverly Duck, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Sociology

Tanner LeBaron Wallace, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Psychology in Education

Dissertation Advisor: Elizabeth Votruba-Drzal, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of
Psychology

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Daphne A. Henry, Ph.D.

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Racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps appear in early childhood, persist into adolescence, and undermine long-term well-being. Scholarship typically examines whether family socioeconomic inequality explains racial skills gaps; however, increasing research indicates that the academic returns to socioeconomic status (SES) differ for Black and White children and that the size of Black-White achievement gaps vary by SES, with the largest disparities evident among the highest-SES students. The processes underlying the development of within-SES racial gaps remain unclear, though growing evidence suggests that racial disparities in proximity to (dis)advantage shape family life in critical ways. Nevertheless, little research has directly explored these pathways. This mixed-methods project addresses this limitation. Study 1 used nationally representative, longitudinal data to (1) investigate how SES moderates race gaps from kindergarten entry through eighth grade, and (2) determine whether skills evident in early childhood explain subsequent within-SES racial skills disparities. Study 2 collected semi-structured interview data from a socioeconomically-diverse sample of Black and White families to (1) explore disparities in SES-matched Black and White families' proximity to intergenerational, spatial, and relational (dis)advantage, and (2) examine within-SES racial differences in young children's family contexts that may be attributable to disparities in proximity to (dis)advantage. Study 1's results reveal that

household income and parental education operated differently, with Black-White gaps narrowing as income increased but growing as education rose. Additionally, Black children lost ground to their SES-matched White peers as they progressed through primary school. Finally, differences in early skills help explain why SES moderated Black-White disparities later in development. Study 2's findings show that parenting values and beliefs are generally similar across race and SES. However, race intersects with SES to produce complex patterns of inequality in family life. Although economic disadvantage places limits on all parents, irrespective of race, constraints are more pronounced and take a more pernicious form among low-income Black parents. Higher-income grants parents escape from the most serious threats to their children's well-being, but the returns to higher SES are not equivalent for middle-income Black and White families, and only among the most affluent families do race differences diminish considerably or disappear altogether.

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PREFACE

Paradoxically, the journey toward a dissertation is at once a solitary and communal process. The intellectual content and labor manifested in such an undertaking is abetted by mentors, teachers, and colleagues, while the intensive effort and occasional travails encountered en route to its completion are ameliorated by the support of family and friends. To all those who offered intellectual and emotional succor along the way, you have my sincere gratitude. But, I'd like to acknowledge several of those individuals by name.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nearly 150 years after the abolition of slavery and roughly 50 years since federal legislation abrogated Jim Crow laws, racial inequalities in life outcomes remain a stubborn fixture of American society. Black Americans have made substantial social and economic gains in the wake of the civil rights movement, yet stark racial disparities in wages, educational attainment, employment, poverty, health, incarceration rates, and wealth persist. In the pre-civil rights era, systematic discrimination and oppression was the main source of Black Americans' disadvantage (Wilson, 2012, 1980, 1978). Today, however, mounting evidence suggests disparities in academic skills drive much of the existing Black-White social inequalities. For this reason, closing the achievement gap and identifying its root causes remain the focus of research and policy efforts (Acs, 2011; Carneiro, Heckman, & Masterov, 2005; Fryer, 2011; Heckman, 2011; Jencks & Phillips, 1998).

Black children do not begin life on equal footing with their White peers and are more likely to grow up in disadvantaged families and impoverished communities. Thus, it's tempting to lay the origins of the Black-White achievement gap at the feet of the entrenched array of social and economic adversity Black families confront. However, a growing literature suggests that the interplay of race and socioeconomic status (SES) is more complex and that educational returns to SES differ by race. First, multiple lines of research document that racial achievement disparities often persist after taking family socioeconomic status (SES) into account (Magnuson & Duncan,

2006; Murnane et al., 2006; Reardon, Robinson-Cimpian, & Weathers, 2015). Second, evidence shows that the magnitude of Black-White achievement gaps vary by family SES, with the largest gaps evident among children and adolescents from the most socioeconomically-advantaged families (Bromberg & Theokas, 2013; J. R. Campbell, Donahue, Reese, & Phillips, 1996; Ferguson, 2007a; Ogbu & Davis, 2003; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Lastly, recent research indicates that income's association with academic skills differs for Black and White families (M. E. Campbell, Haveman, Wildhagen, & Wolf, 2008; Dixon-Román, Everson, & McArdle, 2013; Henry & Votruba-Drzal, under revision).

Taken together, these findings call into question the dominant theoretical perspective on the origins of the Black-White achievement gap, which suggests that racial disparities in SES give rise to racial gaps in achievement, and raise two key questions, which this project seeks to address: Namely, (1) Does proximity to other forms of (dis)advantage shape Black and White children's developmental contexts in disparate ways; and (2) Through which processes does proximity to (dis)advantage influence Black and White children's cognitive and academic development and foment within-SES skills gaps?

Due to historical patterns of racial stratification and unequal treatment in the economic, political, and social spheres, Black families confront greater proximity to multiple forms of disadvantage than their White counterparts. Irrespective of SES, Black Americans are more likely to have grown up in low-income households and communities (Heflin & Pattillo, 2006; Sharkey, 2013), to live in impoverished and dangerous neighborhoods (Alba, Logan, & Bellair, 1994; Logan, 2011; Massey & Denton, 1993; Sampson, Sharkey, & Raudenbush, 2008; Sharkey, 2014), and to be embedded in disadvantaged kin and peer networks (Chiteji & Hamilton, 2002; Fernandez & Harris, 1992; Tigges, Browne, & Green, 1998). In turn, greater proximity to disadvantage

diminishes Black Americans' access to valuable forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that promote achievement and general well-being, including social capital (i.e., resources derived from social networks linked by shared norms and expectations of reciprocity), cultural capital (i.e., cultural resources, orientations, skills, and goods), and economic capital (i.e., wealth). For these reasons, SES may not operate similarly for Black and White families due to the ways that proximity to (dis)advantage and attendant disparities in social, cultural, and economic capital shape developmental contexts.

Using a mixed-methods design, this dissertation improves our understanding of the independent and interactive associations between race, family SES, and cognitive and academic skills at kindergarten entry, explore the pathways through which proximity to (dis)advantage shapes young children's development, and inform theoretical perspectives on why SES operates differently for Black and White families. First, using nationally representative data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 (ECLS-K), study 1 examines whether the academic returns to SES differ for Black and White families. Specifically, study 1 investigates the independent and interactive contributions of race and family SES to the development of the Black-White achievement gap from kindergarten entry through eighth grade.

Study 2 uses qualitative methods to elucidate the mechanisms by which proximity to (dis)advantage shapes young SES-matched Black and White children's family contexts in disparate ways. More precisely, study 2 will collected demographic survey information and in-depth semi-structured interview data from a stratified sample ($N = 56$) of low-income ($n = 20$), middle-income ($n = 22$), and high-income ($n = 14$) Black and White families with preschool-age children. This qualitative study explores in greater depth the variety and nature of Black-White differences in proximity to (dis)advantage among SES-matched families. In tandem, these studies

will enhance understanding of the independent and interactive associations between race, family SES, and academic development in early childhood, elucidate the pathways through which proximity to (dis)advantage shapes young children’s development, and inform a novel conceptual model (see Figure 1) of how race and SES intersect to shape early family life.

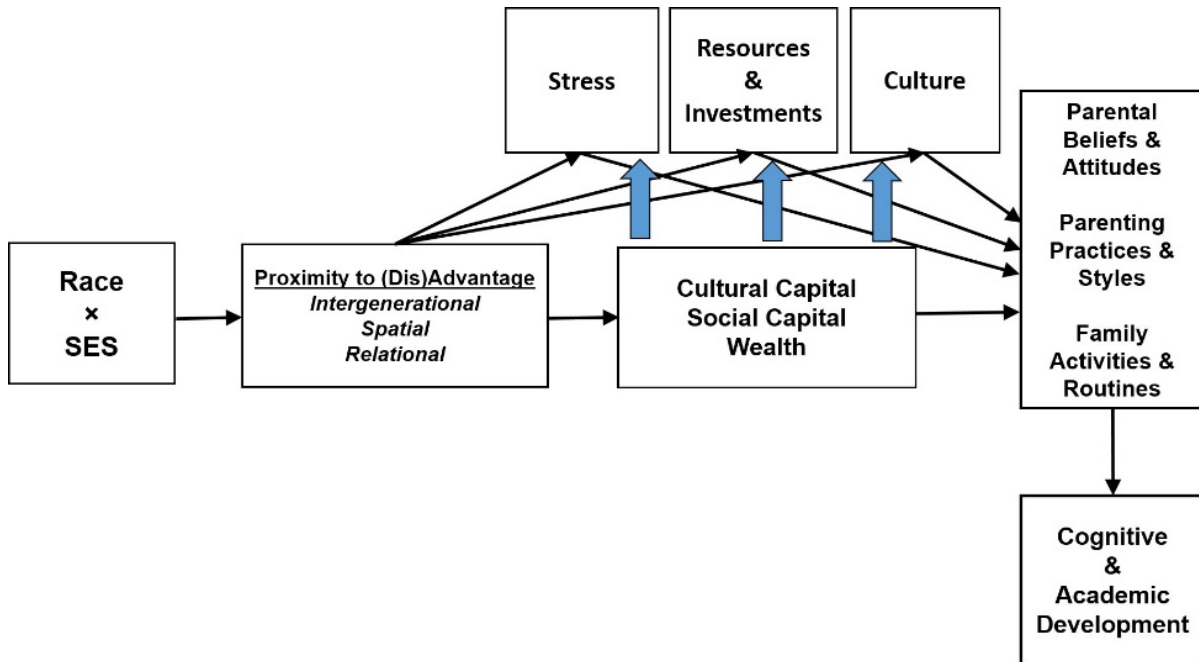


Figure 1. Conceptual model illustrating the pathways through which race and SES intersect to shape children’s intellectual development

1.1 INTERSECTIONALITY THEORY & RACIAL DIFFERENCES IN PROXIMITY TO (DIS)ADVANTAGE

To conceptualize why family SES’s effects on achievement may differ for Black and White families, this study adopts an intersectionality approach to child development. Intersectionality theory emphasizes how the convergence of multiple social identities structures the lived

experiences, and, as a result, the norms, beliefs, dispositions, and behaviors of individuals (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005). Social identities (such as race and social class) are mutually constitutive and thus operate simultaneously to configure the social, economic, and cultural conditions families experience (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013; Cole, 2009). Present social conditions moreover reflect not only individual choices, abilities, and preferences but also broader historical and societal patterns of stratification in the U.S. Importantly, developmental theorists have long emphasized how children's immediate social contexts (e.g., families and schools) are nested within and thus affected by overarching macrostructural (cultural, social, and political) contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Super & Harkness, 1986, 1997; Wachs, 2015). For Black individuals and families, these structural conditions include lingering patterns of social exclusion, isolation, and oppression (Coll et al., 1996), which are legacies of America's early racial caste system and may engender markedly disparate developmental contexts even among Black and White children whose parents have comparable levels of income and education.

For generations, Black Americans were denied the opportunity to enjoy full citizenship and its attendant benefits. Even after Blacks escaped legal bondage, they were constrained by the shackles of legally-enshrined second class citizenship under the Jim Crow regime in the U.S. South, de facto discrimination and segregation in the U.S. North, and institutional and systemic obstacles to their full inclusion in programs and policies which helped bolster the growth of the U.S. middle class. Most notably, Black Americans confronted a system of legally-enforced prohibitions on their ability to pursue education, including anti-literacy laws during slavery and separate and unequal public school settings under segregation (J. D. Anderson, 2004). Together, these factors limited African Americans'¹ ability to acquire human capital and foreclosed their

¹ Black and African American are used interchangeably.

access to better employment opportunities and higher wages (Carruthers & Wanamaker, 2017). Additionally, a combination of redlining (which was for many years buttressed by Federal Housing Administration lending practices) and restrictive covenants limited Black Americans' ability to obtain mortgages, which has hindered African Americans' opportunity to accrue wealth and contributed to entrenched patterns of residential segregation and isolation (Lui et al., 2006; Massey & Denton, 1993; Oliver & Shapiro, 2006). As a result of the greater social isolation concomitant with residential segregation, African Americans, in general, have had access to fewer sources of economic and social support to tap into and more restricted access to sources of cultural knowledge. Importantly, Massey and Denton (1993) underscore the pervasive nature of segregation's influence on individual behavior, preferences, and resources: "Residential segregation lies beyond the ability of any individual to change; it constrains black life chances irrespective of personal traits, individual motivations, or private achievements" (p. 2-3).

Due to these sociohistorical processes of racial stratification and unequal treatment in the economic, political, and social spheres (Coll et al., 1996; Ladson-Billings, 2006), Black families confront greater *proximity to intergenerational, spatial, and relational disadvantage* than their White counterparts (Gosa & Alexander, 2007; Henry, 2014). Irrespective of SES, Black Americans are more likely to have grown up in impoverished households and communities (Heflin & Pattillo, 2006; Sharkey, 2013), to live in or near distressed neighborhoods (Alba et al., 1994; Logan, 2011; Massey & Denton, 1993; Sampson et al., 2008; Sharkey, 2014), and to be embedded in disadvantaged kin and peer networks (Chiteji & Hamilton, 2002; Fernandez & Harris, 1992; Tigges et al., 1998). In turn, family SES may operate differently for Black and White children due to the ways that proximity to (dis)advantage impacts families' (1) access to resources, (2) exposure to stressors, and (3) patterns of parental care and investment.

1.2 PATHWAYS LINKING SES TO ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Indeed, an extensive theoretical literature posits that social class differences in *resources and investments, environmental stressors, and sociocultural factors* at the family and community level illustrate how socioeconomic disparities in children's development emerge (for a review, see Magnuson & Votruba-Drzal, 2009). Moreover, informing these theoretical perspectives is a large body of developmental scholarship showing that three key parenting attributes promote healthy development: (1) cognitive stimulation and provision of learning resources, (2) warmth and emotional support, and (3) sensitivity and contingent responsiveness (Bradley & Caldwell, 1984; Bradley et al., 1989; Landry & Smith, 2008; Lugo-Gil & Tamis-LeMonda, 2008). According to *resource and investment theory*, SES (in conjunction with individual endowments) dictates the amount time and money as well as the variety and quality of experiences and materials families invest in children. Disadvantaged children tend to receive less cognitive stimulation and have less access to intellectually-enriching resources and activities in the home and the community, which hinders their early cognitive and academic development (Guo & Harris, 2000; Hart & Risley, 1995; Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, McCarton, & McCormick, 1998; Leventhal, Dupéré, & Shuey, 2015; Votruba-Drzal, 2003). *Environmental stress theories* emphasize how family- and community-level stressors, stemming from economic hardship, negative life events, violence, chaotic homes, neighborhood disorder, and pollution (Conger & Elder, 1994; Evans, 2004; Evans, Eckenrode, & Marcynyszyn, 2010), can undermine children's development directly through chronic hyperactivation of the stress response system (Kim et al., 2013; Jack P. Shonkoff, 2010) and indirectly through increased parental psychological distress and harsh or withdrawn parenting (Conger et al., 2002; Evans & Kim, 2012). Lastly, *sociocultural perspectives* focus on the ways that structural conditions (i.e., social and economic relations) give rise to cultural differences in

family life across SES (Bourdieu, 1973; Coll et al., 1996; Sherman & Harris, 2012; Small, Harding, & Lamont, 2010). Such theories contend that disparities in social position, opportunities, and power constitute the salient factors underlying a “cultural logic of child rearing” and its expression through parenting practices (Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Lareau, 2011, 2003, p. 3; Lareau & Weininger, 2003).

1.3 HOW PROXIMITY TO (DIS)ADVANTAGE IMPACTS THE PATHWAYS LINKING SES TO ACADEMIC SKILLS

In sum, proximity to (dis)advantage may alter the association between family SES and child development via three processes: by (1) limiting or facilitating access to salutary resources (e.g., safe and cohesive neighborhoods, social capital, cultural capital, and wealth), (2) exacerbating or mitigating the effects of family and environmental stressors (e.g., financial strain and community disadvantage), and (3) shaping cultural orientations toward childrearing and family life. Notably, family and community contexts often differ markedly for SES-matched Black and White children. For example, low-income White mothers evince greater knowledge of child development, stronger beliefs in the necessity of talking and reading to very young children, and higher rates of emotionally-supportive and cognitively-stimulating parenting than their Black peers (Keels, 2009; Raikes et al., 2006). Among children with college-educated mothers, racial disparities in the home learning environment are also evident, with higher-SES Black children having fewer books at home and experiencing less effective parental teaching strategies (Ferguson, 2007a, 2007b; Moore, 1986). For Black children, family-level poverty is also more closely connected to extreme neighborhood disadvantage (Logan, 2011; Massey & Denton, 1993), and low-income Black

mothers living in impoverished communities report experiencing severe psychological distress due, in part, to high rates of criminality, social dysfunction, and dilapidated housing and neighborhood environs (Turney, Kissane, & Edin, 2013).

Additionally, while financial strain can elevate levels of stress among both Black and White families and thereby compromise parenting quality (Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simons, 1994; McLoyd, 1990), on average, low-income White families possess greater wealth and more assets to buffer against the ravages of extreme deprivation (Conley, 1999; Shanks, 2011). Because middle-class Black families require more wage earners and work the equivalent of three additional months each year in order to attain the same income level as their White counterparts (Shapiro, 2004), and also lag far behind their White counterparts in wealth holdings (Conley, 1999; Shapiro, 2004; Shapiro, Meschede, & Sullivan, 2010), higher-SES Black families also likely experience higher levels of economic pressure and have less time and discretionary income to devote to enrichment activities inside and outside the home. Furthermore, wealth (as distinct from income alone) not only affords access to better neighborhoods and educational opportunities (Shapiro, 2004), it also likely acts as a proxy for grandparental SES and the intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage (Chiteji, 2010; Spilerman, 2000). Studies have in fact found that grandparental SES makes an independent contribution to the size of the Black-White achievement gap (Mandara, Varner, Greene, & Richman, 2009; Phillips, Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Crane, 1998).

Finally, in the context (or *field*²) of family life, greater proximity to disadvantage may constrain Black Americans' access to other valuable resources (or forms of capital) that promote achievement, namely *social capital* (i.e., resources derived from social networks linked by shared

² Field denotes a social setting or sphere of activity.

norms and expectations of reciprocity) and *cultural capital* (i.e., cultural orientations, skills, goods, and credentials) (Bourdieu, 1986; Lareau, 2001; Portes, 1998, 2000). The forms of capital (economic, social, and cultural) are fungible, and their benefits accrue across generations. At the family level, parents draw upon their own cultural capital (skills, credentials, preferences, and artifacts) to inculcate children's intellectual dispositions (or *habitus*³) and develop their competencies (Bourdieu, 1984, 2010; Lareau, 2001, 2011, 2003). Additionally, when families are connected to privileged social networks, they are better positioned to leverage those connections to acquire economic and social goods, such as financial assistance, practical information, and cultural knowledge (Burton & Jarrett, 2000; Furstenberg, 2005; Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003).

Heflin and Pattillo (2006) found that low-income Black adults were half as likely (as low-income Whites) to have a middle-class sibling, while stably middle-income Blacks had a 2.6 greater chance of having a low-income sibling (when compared to their White peers). In addition, Tigges and colleagues reported that low- and middle-income Whites were 24% more likely than their Black counterparts to have a close tie to a college-educated adult. Among those living in poverty, 68% of Whites and only 35% percent of Blacks reported having a personal relationship with a college-educated adult (Tigges et al., 1998). Greater social isolation among low-income Blacks may restrict their access to instrumental social support as well as diverse sources of cultural know-how (de Souza Briggs, 1998; Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Fram, 2003). Similarly, middle-class and affluent Black families' childrearing orientations and academic socialization practices may differ substantially from those of their White peers (Bodovski, 2010) due to a history of

³ Habitus refers to the deep-seated cognitive dispositions individuals acquire through socialization that guide their behaviors and perceptions.

systematic and institutionalized discrimination that limited Black Americans' ability to accrue not only wealth but also the cultural repertoires attendant to economic privilege and sanctioned by societal institutions such as schools (E. Anderson, 2012; Coll et al., 1996; O'Connor, Lewis, & Mueller, 2007).

In sum, the processes underlying proximity to disadvantage likely play out differently across levels of SES. Racial disparities in stressors and resources may drive racial differences in the cognitive and academic returns to SES among low-SES Black and White families. For socioeconomically-disadvantaged Black families, extreme neighborhood disadvantage (characterized by high levels of poverty, crime, and chaos) may be a central stressor affecting family contexts and thereby shaping children's development. Among middle-class Black and White families, however, disparities in patterns of investment and childrearing repertoires might be the primary forces driving greater returns to SES for middle-class White children. For middle-class Black families, intergenerational factors (i.e., disadvantaged family background and diminished access to social capital, cultural capital, and wealth) may be the primary forces influencing family life and children's cognitive and academic development. In short, for disadvantaged Black families, more income may provide escape from high-stress, low-resource contexts, while higher socioeconomic status might not notably modify advantaged Black families' parenting behaviors, which may be constrained by limited access to non-material resources. Nevertheless, little extant research has adopted an intersectional perspective to explain why the link between family SES and achievement may differ for Black and White children (O'Connor et al., 2007).

1.4 THE BLACK-WHITE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN EARLY & MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Small, but significant, racial disparities in cognitive development emerge early in development (Rippeyoung, 2009) and increase gradually over the preschool period (Fryer & Levitt, 2013). By the time children reach ages 3 to 4, a troublingly large one SD gap in receptive vocabulary exists between Black and White preschoolers (Brooks-Gunn, Klebanov, Smith, Duncan, & Lee, 2003; Farkas & Beron, 2004). Large racial gaps in early academic skills also surface during the preschool years. Yeung and Pfeiffer (2009) observed a three-fourths SD gap in mathematical problem solving and about a two-fifths SD gap in letter and word knowledge in a sample of Black and White preschoolers (ages 3 – 5), and Burchinal et al. (2011) found Black-White test score gaps of equivalent magnitude in a low-income sample of preschoolers.

Preschool vocabulary knowledge, oral language skills, and numeracy skills predict later reading and math achievement (Aunola, Leskinen, Lerkkanen, & Nurmi, 2004; Hart & Risley, 1995; Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2000). Thus, it's not surprising that large racial gaps exist across a spate of school readiness indicators (Grissmer & Eiseman, 2008; Reardon, 2008; Reardon et al., 2015). On average, Black children enter school with more poorly-developed literacy and math skills (Reardon & Portilla, 2016). Past scholarship has identified Black-White gaps of roughly 0.40 of a standard deviation (SD) in literacy skills and disparities ranging from 0.60-0.75 SDs in math skills at kindergarten entry (Burchinal et al., 2011; Fryer & Levitt, 2004; Yeung & Pfeiffer, 2009). More recently, Quinn (2015) found Black-White gaps of just 0.32 SD and 0.54 SD in reading and math, respectively, in a national sample of children who entered kindergarten in 2010-11. However, Reardon and Portilla (2016) reported that these race gaps did not differ significantly in size from those observed in an earlier kindergarten cohort, leaving it uncertain

whether these disparities have declined meaningfully or stayed stable. Far fewer studies have examined early racial gaps in science achievement, but recent work revealed that Black children lagged 0.62 SD behind their White peers in science knowledge at kindergarten entry (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, & Maczuga, 2016) and 0.82 SD behind White students in science skills by the spring of kindergarten (Curran & Kellogg, 2016).

But, how do these early gaps develop across time? Fryer & Levitt (2005) found that Black-White achievement disparities increased by 0.10 SD per year. By fifth grade, racial gaps reach 1.0 SD in math and 0.75 SD in reading (Reardon & Robinson, 2007), and thereafter remain stable through eighth grade (Reardon et al., 2015). With respect to science achievement, Black-White gaps exceed 1.0 SD by third grade (Kohlhaas, Lin, & Chu, 2010; Rathbun & West, 2004) and likewise persist essentially unchanged (Quinn & Cooc, 2015) or increase only marginally (Morgan et al., 2016) through eighth grade.

1.5 SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS & ACHIEVEMENT GAPS ACROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Family SES is also strongly linked to children's academic performance (Duncan, Magnuson, & Votruba-Drzal, 2015), and SES disparities in educational performance (like those related to race) are pronounced at school entry and persist through middle childhood and adolescence (Isaacs & Magnuson, 2011; Reardon et al., 2015). Efforts to elucidate the channels through which SES affects skills has culminated in a substantial body of scholarship evincing a clear connection between academic competence and household income and parental education in particular.

1.5.1 Household income

Multiple lines of research document that children from low-income and poor families are at greater risk for a range of maladaptive cognitive and academic outcomes—including lower IQ, poor school readiness, and school failure and dropout (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Duncan et al., 2015). Income-related disparities in cognitive skills appear in infancy and increase during early childhood (Halle et al., 2009; Isaacs & Magnuson, 2011; Mayer, 2010). By kindergarten entry, poor and low-income children dramatically underperform their higher-income peers in reading and math achievement (Bassok & Loeb, 2015; Lee & Burkam, 2002), with skills disparities between poor children and their middle-income and highly affluent peers exceeding roughly four-fifths of a standard deviation (SD) and one SD, respectively (Isaacs & Magnuson, 2011).

Research employing experimental and quasi-experimental designs and rigorous statistical methods provides strong evidence that income's effect on academic development is causal (Duncan, Morris, & Rodrigues, 2011; Mayer, 2010; Morris, Duncan, & Clark-Kauffman, 2005; Morris, Huston, Duncan, Crosby, & Bos, 2001). Multiple analyses of several experimental antipoverty and welfare reform studies undertaken during the 1990s revealed modest positive effects of income supports on academic skills in early childhood (Duncan et al., 2011; Morris et al., 2005; Morris et al., 2001). Morris et al. (2005) found that family participation in an earnings supplements program improved preschool-aged (ages 2 – 3) and early elementary school-aged (ages 4 – 5) children's academic performance by .07 to .10 of a SD. Using the same data, Duncan et al. (2011) estimated that an additional \$1,000 in yearly income boosted young children's achievement test scores by approximately six-tenths of a SD. More recently, Dahl and Lochner (2012) adopted an instrumental variables approach to assess the impact of exogenous increases in family income (due to a generous boost in Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) outlays) on children's

academic skills. In line with the welfare reform studies, Dahl et al.'s analyses indicated that a \$1,000 boost in income raised achievement scores by six-tenths of a SD.

Notably, existing theory posits and some empirical studies confirm that income's effect on achievement is nonlinear (Blau, 1999; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Mayer, 2002). That is, poor and low-income children seem to benefit more than their middle- and upper-income counterparts from increases in household income (Dahl & Lochner, 2012; Dearing, McCartney, & Taylor, 2001; Duncan, Ziol-Guest, & Kalil, 2010). The timing of economic disadvantage also matters: A family's income level throughout early childhood predicts educational outcomes better than income measured during middle childhood or adolescence (Dearing et al., 2001; Morris et al., 2005; Votruba-Drzal, 2006).

1.5.2 Parental education

Compelling evidence also demonstrates that children with highly-educated parents enter school with better academic skills and exhibit superior academic performance and educational attainment into adulthood (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Carneiro, Meghir, & Parey, 2013; Davis-Kean, 2005; Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Murnane, 1981; Rosenzweig & Wolpin, 1994). At kindergarten entry, school readiness gaps exceed one SD between children whose mothers completed a bachelor's degree and those whose mothers failed to earn a high school diploma. By age 13, skills gaps between children whose parents completed high-school and those whose parents finished college vary from 0.50 to 0.66 SD in math (Reardon & Robinson, 2007) and reach approximately 0.48 of SD in reading (Reardon et al., 2015).

Notably, to better assess whether the effect of parental educational attainment on children's achievement is causal, a few recent studies have utilized experimental data and instrumental

variable analyses to examine how additional years of maternal schooling relate to children's academic skills (Carneiro et al., 2013; Magnuson & McGroder, 2002). Carneiro and colleagues (2013) reported that each additional year of maternal education improved children's reading and math performance by a modest .08 and .10 standard deviation units, respectively. Magnuson and McGroder (2002), however, found that increasing maternal education yielded a .23 standard deviation improvement in children's academic skills.

1.6 SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS & THE BLACK-WHITE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Because Black children are more likely to grow up in poor families, it is necessary to disentangle the independent contributions of SES and race to the Black-White skills gap (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005). The existing evidence suggests that racial disparities in family SES cannot fully account for the development of racial gaps in academic skills (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Magnuson & Duncan, 2006; Morrison, Bachman, & Connor, 2005; Phillips, Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1998; Reardon et al., 2015). Variation in SES explains anywhere from one-fourth to two-thirds of the racial gap, though estimates differ by grade level, test metric, and sample cohort (Fryer & Levitt, 2004; Magnuson & Duncan, 2006; Murnane et al., 2006; Reardon, 2008; Reardon et al., 2015).

Phillips and colleagues (1998) found that controlling for maternal education and household income yielded a trivial reduction in the 17-point vocabulary gap at school entry, while adjusting for a more extensive set of family background factors explained approximately one-half of the vocabulary skills gap. More recently, Fryer and Levitt (2004) reported that a composite indicator of parental schooling, income, and occupational status explained about two-thirds and two-fifths

of the Black-White gaps in reading and math, respectively. In their analyses, the inclusion of additional parent, child, and family covariates (e.g., federal nutrition assistance program participation, number of children's books in the home, child gender and age at school entry) eliminated the Black-White literacy gap and accounted for nearly 85 percent of the math gap at kindergarten entry. Yet, in Murnane et al.'s analyses using the NICHD SECCYD sample, controlling for family SES and related household characteristics reduced the racial gap in language and math skills by only 40 percent and 37 percent, respectively, at school entry. By third grade, family SES explained a much smaller proportion of the gap in both samples. At the conclusion of third grade, Fryer and Levitt (2006) found that just 60 percent of racial achievement disparities were attributable to SES and child and family factors, and Murnane et al. showed that accounting for SES and covariates shrank Black-White skills gaps by roughly 30 percent.

1.7 THE INTERSECTION OF RACIAL & SOCIOECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Existing research tends to focus on the additive effects of SES and race on achievement, and traditional theoretical models often treat income (and other SES markers) as mediators of racial achievement disparities. Accordingly, as illustrated above, studies of socioeconomic disparities in achievement often control for race/ethnicity and vice versa. Yet, little research has investigated whether race alters the relation between SES and academic skills—a critical limitation of the extant research. As noted earlier, intersectionality theory stresses the importance of understanding how “master” social categories or identities (e.g., race and social class) interact in meaningful ways to generate complex patterns of inequality (McCall, 2001, 2005; Warner, 2008).

Indeed, the small literature that explores how race and SES intersect to shape academic outcomes suggests that educational returns to family SES differ for Black and White children and adolescents. For instance, a set of supplemental analyses conducted by Yeung and Pfeiffer (2009) revealed that Black-White disparities in math skills were largest among children from middle-income and affluent families, while racial gaps in language and math skills were widest among children with better-educated parents. Similarly, in a series of within-race analyses, Fryer and Levitt (2004) found that the association between improvements in SES and gains in math scores in the fall of kindergarten was nearly twice as large for White children as for Black children. The strength of the relation between higher SES and reading achievement at kindergarten entry was about one-third larger for White children than for their Black peers. Based on these findings, Fryer (2010) surmised “there is something that higher income buys whites that is not fully realized among blacks” (p. 19).

In their ethnographic study of a high-SES suburban community, Ogbu and Davis (2003) also observed stark disparities in proficiency test and SAT scores, grade point average (GPA), and enrollment in gifted, honors, and Advanced Placement (AP) classes between Black and White students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Likewise, using survey data from more than 34,000 students in 15 middle- and upper-income school districts, Ronald Ferguson (2007) discovered that Black-White gaps in self-reported GPA and comprehension of classroom lessons and course readings grew as SES increased among students in grades 7 – 11.

Racial skills gaps between SES-matched students also appear on national standardized tests. For instance, on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) twelfth grade reading and math assessments from 1994 and 1998, achievement disparities were greatest between Black and White students with the most highly-educated parents (J. R. Campbell et al., 1996; Thernstrom

& Thernstrom, 2003); similarly, the Black-White gap on the 2000 NAEP math tests was smaller among poor students (based on eligibility for federal school lunch assistance) than among higher income students in grades 4, 8, and 12 (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Additionally, 2011 NAEP data showed that—compared to low-income White students—higher-income Black students were more likely to score “below basic” in math and equally likely to perform at the advanced level in math in both fourth and eighth grades (Bromberg & Theokas, 2013). Lastly, in 2003, the average SAT score for Black students who reported household incomes between \$80,000 and \$100,000 was *lower* than the average score for White students with household incomes of less than \$10,000 (Dixon-Román et al., 2013).

In sum, this converging evidence suggests that SES may not predict academic achievement equivalently for Black and White children. Merely holding race/ethnicity constant in analyses of achievement disparities may therefore hinder a nuanced understanding of the complex associations between SES, race, and achievement. Racial disparities in income, educational attainment, and wealth remain a fixture of American society, but, more importantly, inequities in socioeconomic mobility and socioeconomic attainments reflect underlying, systematic variations in the experiences of Black and White families across the contexts of their lives. For these reasons, race may fundamentally alter the experiences of Black Americans no matter the socioeconomic strata from which they hail or to which they ascend.

2.0 HOW BLACK-WHITE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS DIFFER BY FAMILY SES LEVEL FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD THROUGH EARLY ADOLESCENCE

2.1 RESEARCH AIMS & HYPOTHESES

Analysis of the Black-White achievement gap pervades the psychological, sociological, and education literatures, yet little scholarship has systematically considered how race and SES intersect to shape achievement. Consequently, this study's primary goal was to investigate whether family SES moderated the size of Black-White achievement gaps between early childhood (i.e., kindergarten entry) and early adolescence (i.e., eighth grade). To do so, study 1 addresses three aims. First, it pinpoints the size of Black-White skills gaps at each grade level after controlling for family SES. Next, it examines whether Black-White disparities differ by family SES level in early childhood and explores how these within-SES race gaps changed across the remaining primary school years (i.e., grades 3-8). Finally, it tests whether differences in children's skills at kindergarten entry explain Black-White achievement gaps among SES-matched children in middle childhood and early adolescence. Based on the existing research, it is expected that Black-White skills gaps to increase as household income and parental education rose and within-SES racial disparities to grow across middle childhood (i.e., from kindergarten through fifth grade) but remain stable thereafter. It is also predicted that achievement scores at kindergarten entry will account for the preponderance of the within-SES race gaps evident later in development.

2.2 METHODS

2.2.1 Participants

Data were drawn from the ECLS-K ($N \approx 21,000$), a longitudinal, nationally-representative, and multimethod study that tracked the educational experiences and development of U.S. children from the fall of kindergarten through the spring of eighth grade. The ECLS-K possesses two key strengths. First, it is racially, economically, and geographically diverse. Second, it includes repeated and consistent measures of parental demographics, family and home environments, and children's academic development, allowing us to estimate parallel models of children's academic skills across kindergarten, third, fifth, and eighth grades.

This study's analytic sample comprises about 9,100 Black and White children whose parents were born in the U.S. Among these children, 44.02% had complete data on all variables included in the analyses. The percentage of missing data for each variable ranged from 0.1% to 24.25%. The percentage of missing data varied depending on the source of information: from 0% to 7.1% for the invariant child characteristics, from 0.1% to 20.88% for children's time-variant characteristics, from 1.18% to 21.44% for the academic assessments, and from 0.01% to 24.25% for the parent and household characteristics. Missing data were treated using Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML), and all analyses included a series of NCES-designed sampling (C2CW0) and jackknife-replicate weights to adjust for differential sampling and attrition.

2.2.2 Measures

Academic achievement. Direct assessments measured math, reading and, science achievement at kindergarten entry and in the spring of third, fifth and eighth grades. These 100-item tests were designed by ECLS-K researchers to assess age- and grade-appropriate skills and knowledge as well as to align in content with National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP) frameworks (Najarian, Pollack, & Sorongon, 2009). Math assessments measured number sense, pattern recognition, and numerical operations, estimation, and measurement skills, spatial reasoning and geometry knowledge, probabilistic reasoning and statistical inference, and understanding of functions and algebraic concepts. Reading tests assessed letter recognition, phonological awareness, vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension and interpretation, and critical reflection and analysis. In kindergarten, a general knowledge test appraised children's factual knowledge about and conceptual understanding of the natural sciences and social studies. Prior work has shown this general knowledge test is highly predictive of later science achievement (Morgan et al., 2016); thus, we used it as a proxy measure for science skills at school entry. Beginning in third grade, a science test evaluated conceptual understanding and scientific investigation skills across the multiple fields, including earth, space, physical, and life sciences.

Assessments were delivered in a two-stage adaptive process. First, a common set of items was presented to all children. Second, children's performance on this baseline assessment determined whether they were routed to a set of more or less challenging test questions. Because not all children received the same questions, item response theory (IRT) scores were calculated to generate comparable scores across children and to facilitate longitudinal analysis of achievement. The IRT scores estimate children's performance on the assessments as if they had been administered the entire test battery. The theta reliabilities for the reading assessments at

kindergarten entry and in grades 3, 5, and 8 were 0.92, 0.94, 0.93, and 0.87, respectively; for the math tests, reliabilities reached 0.91, 0.95, 0.95, and 0.92 for each grade; and for the science instruments, the theta reliabilities were 0.88, 0.88, 0.87, and 0.84, respectively (Najarian et al., 2009).

Family SES. Derived from parents' reports, household income and parental education served as indices of family SES. We constructed continuous measures of household income scaled in \$10,000 units and inflated to 2007 dollars using the Consumer Price Index. Income was averaged across all study waves up through the period of skills assessment. For example, in the analyses predicting achievement at kindergarten entry, household income at wave 2 (i.e., spring of kindergarten) was used as a predictor, whereas for the models predicting eighth-grade achievement, household income was averaged across all seven rounds of data collection. Dummy variables designated whether parents' highest level of educational attainment was less than a high school degree (reference group), a high school diploma, some college, or vocational training, or a bachelor's degree or higher. Because education changes over time, we devised a cumulative measure reflecting the schooling level into which parents were categorized for the majority of the study. Parents who did not spend a preponderance of time in any single education category were assigned the highest schooling level they reported.

Child characteristics. All child characteristics were also derived from parents' reports. A dichotomous indicator denoted whether children were Black or White (reference group) and had native-born U.S. citizen parents. Dummy variables indicated whether children were classified as male or female (reference group), born low (< 2,500 grams) or normal birthweight (\geq 2,500 grams; reference group), or had ever been in fair or poor health. Child health status was compiled across

all rounds of data collection up through the point of skills assessment. Child age at assessment was measured in months.

Parental and household characteristics. Dichotomous indicators of maternal employment status denoted whether mothers worked more than 35 hours a week, worked less than 35 hours a week, or were unemployed (reference group). We operationalized family structure using three variables: categorical indicators denoted whether parents were stably married (i.e., married at kindergarten entry or stably married across all waves) and continuous measures reflected the average number of children under age 18 and adults ages 18 and over in the household. Like the other time-varying measures, we collapsed parental and household covariates across all data collection waves up through the period of cognitive assessment.

2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Analytic models were estimated in Stata 13.0 using FIML, which handles missing data optimally and produces unbiased and consistent parameter estimates (Allison, 2003). The FIML method estimates a likelihood function for each individual based on the variables that are present; hence, all available data are used. Full sample and replicate weights were used in conjunction with Stata's survey and subpopulation commands to ensure correct variance estimation, render all results nationally-representative, and restrict estimation to Black and White children whose parents were born in the U.S.

An intercategorical approach guides study 1's analyses (Warner, 2008), meaning this research considered how the superordinate categories of race and social class related to achievement before it tested how the intersections of these categories predicted skills gaps. First,

the size of Black-White achievement gaps in math, reading, and science at kindergarten entry and in grades 3, 5, and 8 were estimated in models that controlled for household income and parental education (Aim 1). Next, to determine whether family SES moderated Black-White skills gaps from early childhood to early adolescence (Aim 2), interactions between race and income and race and parental education were added to these baseline models and explored how the magnitude of race gaps varied by family SES (before and after accounting for demographic covariates). Finally, to test whether differences in early skills explained why Black-White gaps differed by family SES in middle childhood and early adolescence (Aim 3), domain-specific kindergarten-entry achievement scores were introduced to the adjusted moderation models. Specifically, the moderation models predicting math, reading, and science achievement in grades 3, 5, and 8 controlled for baseline math, reading, and science skills, respectively.

All models were also estimated using multiply imputed data, which were imputed using chained equations with 20 iterations. Results were consistent in models using FIML and imputed data. Therefore, the results obtained using FIML are reported.

Table 1. Weighted descriptive statistics for Black and White children

	Black (n = 1,450)				White (n = 7,650)			
	Kindergarten	Third grade	Fifth grade	Eighth grade	Kindergarten	Third grade	Fifth grade	Eighth grade
	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %
Academic achievement								
Math	16.85 (5.51) ^a	73.41 (17.20) ^a	98.20 (21.47) ^a	125.03 (23.69) ^a	21.81 (7.53) ^a	89.53 (16.09) ^a	119.29 (18.73) ^a	147.15 (19.01) ^a
Reading	20.16 (7.02) ^a	97.37 (19.45) ^a	125.75 (23.69) ^a	150.50 (29.35) ^a	23.99 (8.60) ^a	113.53 (18.08) ^a	146.07 (20.29) ^a	178.23 (23.23) ^a
Science	17.61 (5.90) ^a	27.17 (8.63) ^a	46.67 (13.86) ^a	70.53 (16.49) ^a	25.30 (6.92) ^a	37.91 (8.65) ^a	62.90 (11.84) ^a	89.35 (13.12) ^a
Family SES								
Household income	3.42 (3.21) ^a	3.45 (3.13) ^a	3.46 (3.14) ^a	3.53 (3.16) ^a	7.83 (6.74) ^a	8.06 (5.67) ^a	8.12 (5.52) ^a	8.24 (5.44) ^a
Parental education								
Below HS	12.25% ^a	12.31% ^a	11.74% ^a	11.07% ^b	2.54% ^a	2.62% ^a	2.42% ^a	2.36% ^b
HS/Some college	73.60% ^a	73.66% ^a	72.50% ^a	73.99% ^a	54.36% ^a	54.35% ^a	52.41% ^a	53.67% ^a
Bachelor	14.13% ^a	14.52% ^a	15.82% ^a	16.42% ^a	43.09% ^a	43.13% ^a	45.15% ^a	45.41% ^a
Child characteristics								
Sex: female†	50.91%				51.10%			
Normal birth weight†	82.10% ^a				91.38% ^a			
Good health status*	94.65% ^a	97.60% ^b	97.32% ^c	97.86% ^c	98.33% ^a	98.96% ^b	99.23% ^c	99.33% ^c
Age*	68.30 (4.40) ^c	110.86 (4.44)	134.35 (4.43)	171.17 (4.56)	68.89 (4.39) ^c	111.40 (4.42)	135.02 (4.44)	171.69 (4.41)
Parental and household characteristics								
Maternal employment status								
Mom does not work	26.29%	20.35%	24.25%	23.51% ^c	29.14%	25.02%	22.23%	17.98% ^c
Mom works under 35h	12.54% ^a	11.96% ^a	12.76% ^a	13.63% ^b	27.23% ^a	28.77% ^a	28.13% ^a	27.49% ^b
Mom works over 35h	61.17% ^a	64.68% ^a	62.98% ^a	62.85% ^c	43.62% ^a	46.20% ^a	49.63% ^a	54.51% ^c
Married/Stably Married	35.18% ^a	36.04% ^a	36.67% ^a	36.10% ^a	83.14% ^a	83.11% ^a	82.25% ^a	82.81% ^a
Average number of children	2.64 (1.38) ^a	2.66 (1.30) ^a	2.65 (1.27) ^a	2.63 (1.24) ^a	2.01 (0.51) ^a	2.41 (0.97) ^a	2.40 (0.96) ^a	2.38 (0.93) ^a
Average number of adults	1.82 (0.78) ^a	1.85 (0.71) ^a	1.86 (0.69) ^a	1.87 (0.68) ^a	2.39 (1.01) ^a	2.01 (0.44) ^a	2.02 (0.43) ^a	2.03 (0.43) ^a

Note. † = Time-invariant characteristics. * = Time-variant characteristics. OLS regressions tested whether there were significant differences between native Blacks and Whites on each variable. a = group differences at the $p < .001$ level. b = group differences at the $p < .01$ level. . c = group differences at the $p < .05$ level.

2.4 RESULTS

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for the entire sample of Black and White children. Across time, parental education and household income increased modestly, while most other demographic factors remained effectively stable. Significant Black-White differences appear on most markers of SES and child, parental, and household characteristics. Black families were far more socioeconomically-disadvantaged than White families. Average household income for White families was more than twice that of Black families. Approximately 44% of White parents held a bachelor's degree, while about 15% of Black parents completed a college degree or more. White children were more likely to be born normal birthweight, to enjoy good or excellent health, and to have stably married parents. Black mothers, however, were more likely to be employed and tended to work greater hours.

2.4.1 The size and stability of racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps across the primary school years

Results displaying Black-White differences in math, reading, and science achievement at kindergarten entry and in grades 3-8 appear in Table 2. Not surprisingly, even after adjusting for SES factors, race gaps were large and increased between kindergarten and eighth grade. In math, Black students trailed their White peers by 0.38-0.73 SD between kindergarten entry and eighth grade. Similarly, Black-White gaps in reading achievement reached 0.17-0.76 SDs between school entry and grade 8. Finally, Black students performed 0.75, 0.86, 0.67, and 0.35 SDs worse in

science achievement at kindergarten entry and in third, fifth, and eighth grades, respectively. Black-White disparities in math and reading skills grew most dramatically between kindergarten and third grade and more modestly thereafter. By contrast, the race gap in science scores increased only marginally (by about 13%) between kindergarten and third grade, and Black students narrowed the science achievement gap by 59% between grades 3 and 8.

Family SES also consistently predicted skill levels in these models (see Table 2). Income's associations with achievement were significant but modest in size: Achievement gains attributable to income ranged from 0.02-0.06 SDs, and the income-achievement gap did not grow appreciably between early childhood and early adolescence. By contrast, achievement gaps related to parental education level were pronounced and increased across primary school. Compared to children with the least-educated parents, having parents who completed high school or some college predicted gains ranging from 0.44-0.61 SDs in math, 0.39-0.55 SDs in reading, and 0.39-0.79 SDs in science across primary school. Children whose parents completed at least a bachelor's degree outpaced their peers by larger margins: 0.81-0.99 SDs in math, 0.86-0.95 SDs in reading, and 0.87-1.10 SDs in science.

Table 2. Racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps across the primary school years

	Math			Reading			Science		
	Coef.	S.E.	E.S.	Coef.	S.E.	E.S.	Coef.	S.E.	E.S.
Kindergarten									
Black	-2.84***	0.22	0.38	-1.40***	0.34	0.17	-5.52***	0.34	0.75
Income	0.16***	0.03	0.02	0.17***	0.03	0.02	0.14***	0.02	0.02
HS/Some College	3.36***	0.34	0.45	3.34***	0.31	0.39	2.88***	0.38	0.39
Bachelor	6.86***	0.42	0.92	7.27***	0.44	0.86	6.38***	0.47	0.87
Intercept	15.65***	0.34	-	17.49***	0.35	-	19.75***	0.41	-
Third grade									
Black	-10.98***	0.89	0.63	-9.88***	0.79	0.51	-8.23***	0.61	0.87
Income	0.51***	0.06	0.03	0.54***	0.06	0.03	0.17***	0.04	0.02
HS/Some College	7.56***	0.83	0.44	9.95***	1.06	0.52	3.81***	0.55	0.40
Bachelor	14.07***	0.88	0.81	18.09***	1.13	0.94	7.72***	0.58	0.81
Intercept	75.20***	0.96	-	95.57***	1.23	-	31.08***	0.60	-
Fifth grade									
Black	-14.64***	1.56	0.71	-13.63***	1.59	0.62	-9.03***	0.72	0.67
Income	0.64***	0.06	0.03	0.64***	0.07	0.03	0.50***	0.04	0.05
HS/Some College	12.44***	1.38	0.61	12.01***	1.87	0.55	9.34***	0.54	0.70
Bachelor	20.31***	1.35	0.99	20.90***	1.71	0.95	14.81***	0.60	1.10
Intercept	98.27***	1.58	-	124.65***	1.99	-	45.20***	0.62	-
Eight grade									
Black	-15.36***	1.23	0.74	-19.73***	2.36	0.76	-5.32***	0.34	0.35
Income	0.72***	0.07	0.03	0.81***	0.07	0.03	0.23***	0.02	0.02
HS/Some College	12.22***	2.04	0.58	13.58***	1.95	0.53	11.80***	0.36	0.79
Bachelor	20.34***	2.01	0.97	24.25***	2.08	0.94	14.77***	0.44	0.98
Intercept	124.72***	1.93	-	152.14***	2.19	-	20.10***	0.42	-

Note. Coef. = Coefficient; S.E. = Standard Error; E.S. = Effect Size. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. + $p < .10$.

2.4.2 Exploring how Black-White achievement gaps differ by family SES from early childhood through early adolescence

Tables 3-6 show the developmental progression of within-SES racial skills gaps across the primary school years.

2.4.2.1 Moderation of race gaps by SES in early childhood

In the fall of kindergarten, as income increased, racial disparities in math, reading, and science decreased in magnitude (see Table 3). In fact, among all but the poorest families (i.e., those whose household incomes fell below \$20,000), Black children outpaced their White peers in math and reading. That is, both middle- and upper-income Black students scored higher in math and reading than White students (see Figures 2 and 3). Black-White math gaps varied from 0.07 SD at the bottom of the income distribution (with poor Blacks scoring lower than poor Whites) to 1.17 SD at the top of income scale (with affluent Blacks performing better than affluent Whites). Analysis testing income's moderation of early Black-White reading gaps unearthed a similar pattern (Table 3, Model 3). Racial gaps in reading skills ranged from 0.09 SD at the bottom of the income ladder (with Black children lagging behind) to 1.53 SD at the top of the income distribution (with Black children scoring much higher). To illustrate, among families earning \$30,000, Black children scored 0.49 points (0.07 SD) and 0.72 points (0.08 SD) higher in math and reading, respectively; likewise, among families with incomes of \$60,000, Black students performed 1.48 points (0.20 SD) and 2.19 points (0.26 SD) better in math and reading, respectively. However, while race gaps in science also shrank as income increased, Black children's disadvantage in science scores persisted among all but highly-affluent families (i.e., those with incomes exceeding about

\$130,000) (see Figure 4). For example, among low-income families earning \$30,000 and middle-income families earning \$60,000, Black students' science scores lagged behind those of White students by 2.82 points (0.38 SD) and 2.04 points (0.28 SD), respectively. Yet, among families with incomes of \$150,000, Blacks performed 0.30 points (0.04 SD) higher than Whites in science.

In contrast to the pattern for income, Black-White skills gaps grew as parental education increased at kindergarten entry (see Figure 5). Among families in which parents did not complete high school, Black children scored 0.50 points (0.07 SD), 0.75 points (0.09 SD), and 3.60 points (0.49 SD) lower than comparable Whites in math, reading, and science, respectively, with only the difference in science being statistically significant. Among families wherein parents' highest education level was a high school diploma or some college, Blacks trailed Whites by 3.80 points (0.50 SD) in math, 2.97 points (0.35 SD) in reading, and 6.31 points (0.86 SD) in science. Finally, among children whose parents completed a bachelor's degree or higher, race gaps (with Black children performing worse) reached 6.71 points (0.90 SD), 4.88 points (0.58 SD), and 8.52 points (1.16 SD) in math, reading, and science, respectively.

Controlling for child and family characteristics did little to alter these interactive associations (see Table 3, Models 2, 4, and 6) To illustrate, Figures 6-8 display how Black-White math, reading, and science achievement gap vary by parental education level before and after the inclusion of covariates.

2.4.2.2 Moderation of race gaps by SES in middle childhood and early adolescence

Tables 4-6 show the developmental progression of within-SES racial achievement disparities.

Middle childhood. Relative to their White peers, Black children derived larger gains in test scores from increases in household income across middle childhood (i.e., grades 3 and 5), meaning race gaps declined and eventually reversed direction (with Blacks showing better performance) as

income rose. Yet, while at kindergarten entry Black children achieved higher math and reading scores at nearly every rung of the economic ladder, by third grade, both low- and middle-income Blacks performed worse in absolute terms (than comparable Whites) in math and reading, though Black children from solidly middle-income families retained their advantage in reading scores (see Figures 9 and 10). For example, among low-income families (i.e., incomes \leq \$40,000⁴), Black children trailed White children by 6.45-3.66 points (0.37-0.21 SDs) in math and 4.80-1.62 points (0.25-0.08 SDs) in reading. Across the middle of the economic distribution (i.e., incomes spanning \$40,000-\$90,000⁵), analyses showed that, among families with incomes of \$40,000, Black-White gaps (with Blacks scoring lower) reached 2.73 points (0.16 SD) and a trivial 0.56 points (0.03 SD) in math and reading, respectively. At a \$60,000 income level, Black students scored 0.87 points (0.05 SD) lower in math but 1.56 points (0.08 SD) higher in reading, and only when household incomes reached \$80,000 did Blacks perform better in both math (0.99 points; 0.06 SD) and reading (3.68 points; 0.19 SD). At the upper-end of the economic continuum (i.e., incomes \geq \$90,000), race gaps (with Blacks outpacing Whites) varied from 1.92-18.66 points (0.11-1.08 SDs) in math and 4.74-23.82 points (0.25-1.24 SDs) in reading.

These patterns persisted into fifth grade, with low- and middle-income Black students falling further behind White students in math and reading (Figures 11 and 12). Upper-income Blacks retained their skills advantages, which nonetheless declined in magnitude as Whites played catch-up. By grade 5, Black children's achievement deficits ranged from 12.29-9.02 points (0.60-0.44 SDs) in math and 9.71-5.54 points (0.44-0.25 SDs) in reading among low-income families. Likewise, among middle-income families (those earning \geq \$40,000 and $<$ \$90,000), Black students

⁴ \$40,000 roughly demarcates the 25th percentile of household income.

⁵ In this sample, \$40,000-\$90,000 covers the range between approximately the 25th and 75th income percentiles, with \$60,000 hovering near the median income.

consistently performed below their White counterparts in math, with performance gaps spanning 7.93- 3.57 points (0.39-0.17 SDs). In reading, however, while Black children from lower-earning middle-income families (i.e., with incomes between \$40,000-\$60,000) fell 4.15-1.37 points (0.19-0.06 SDs) behind their White peers, Blacks from higher-earning families (i.e., with incomes reaching \$70,000-\$80,000) matched (0.02 points; 0.00 SD) or outpaced (by 1.41 points; 0.06 SD) Whites. In math, among upper-income families, Black children lost considerable ground and initially lagged behind their White counterparts: Specifically, at an income level of \$90,000, Blacks trailed Whites by 2.48 points (0.12 SD). As income reached higher levels of affluence, Blacks caught up to and eventually outperformed their White peers in math. Specifically, when household income reached \$120,000, Black children modestly outscored their White peers by 0.79 points (0.04 SD); thereafter, Blacks' math performance advantage increased steadily, reaching 17.14 points (0.83 SD) at the top of the income ladder. Black students retained a constant advantage in reading among upper-income families. At high income levels, race gaps in reading (with Blacks faring better) varied from 2.80-27.82 points (0.13-1.26 SDs).

Racial differences in science achievement were more consistent across early and middle childhood: That is, Black-White gaps narrowed as income ticked upward, but only at high levels of affluence did Black children erase deficits and ultimately surpass their White peers in science (see Figures 13 and 14). By third grade, among low- and middle-income families (i.e., with incomes below \$90,000), Blacks' achievement deficits ranged from 6.99-2.43 points (0.74-0.26 SDs). At the upper-end of the economic continuum (i.e., incomes \geq \$90,000), racial disparities ranged from 1.86 points (0.20 SD), with Blacks scoring lower, to 8.40 points (0.88 SD), with Blacks scoring higher. These patterns continued into grade 5, though low- and middle-income Black students gained ground on their White counterparts. Among families with incomes falling

below \$90,000, Black children scored between 6.98-1.30 points (0.52-0.10 SDs) below White children in science, meaning gaps decreased between 29% and 62% between grades 3 and 5. Among the most affluent families, Blacks further narrowed the gap and ultimately increased their advantages. At incomes of \$90,000 and higher, Black-White disparities ranged from 0.59 points (0.04 SD) (with Blacks scoring worse) to 12.19 points (0.91 SD) (with Blacks scoring better).

As in early childhood, in grade 3, Black children's performance disadvantages grew as parental education level increased (see Table 4 and Figures 15-17). Among children whose parents did not complete high school, Blacks lagged behind their White peers by 6.45 points (0.37 SD) in math, 4.80 points (0.25 SD) in reading, and 6.99 points (0.74 SD) in science. Race gaps among families in which parents completed high school or some college reached 14.48 points (0.84 SD), 13.91 points (0.72 SD), and 10.22 points (1.07 SD) in math, reading, and science, respectively. Among the most-highly educated families, White students' achievement scores eclipsed those of Black students by 17.23 points (0.99 SD) in math, 16.70 points (0.87 SD) in reading, and 11.97 points (1.26 SD) in science. Between kindergarten entry and third grade, Black-White gaps increased by a factor of more than 5 among children with the most poorly-educated parents, by 64% among children whose parents completed high school or some college, and by about 11% among students whose parents earned at least a bachelor's degree.

Although these disparities persisted, by the spring of fifth grade, they grew more modestly, especially among children from better-educated families (see Figures 15-17). Among children whose parents did not graduate high school, Blacks scored 12.29 points (0.60 SD) and 9.71 points (0.44 SD) lower than Whites in math and reading, respectively. While the magnitude of growth was smaller in relative terms, in absolute terms, Black-White gaps among children from poorly-educated families increased considerably—by approximately 61% in math and 77% in reading.

Among children whose parents earned at least a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree as well as children whose parents graduated college, racial disparities in math (with Blacks faring worse) increased by about 7%. In reading, race gaps (with Blacks scoring lower) widened by approximately 16% among children whose parents completed high school or some college and by 18% among students with college-educated parents. When it came to racial gaps in science achievement, this pattern differed. Specifically, the size of Black-White disparities in science decreased across all levels of parental education in grade 5: Black students' skill deficits in science narrowed by 29% among students whose parents did not complete high school, by 19% among those whose parents finished high school or some post-secondary education, and by 14% among children whose parents completed at least a bachelor's degree. The inclusion of child and family covariates attenuated the size of these differences but did not appreciably change the pattern of associations (see Tables 4 and 5, Models 2, 5, and 8).

Early adolescence. In the spring of eighth grade, these established patterns persisted (see Table 6). Specifically, although performance gaps narrowed and reversed course as income increased, low-income, middle-income, and increasingly, upper-income Black students continued to lose ground to their White peers (see Figures 18-20). At the same time, achievement disparities grew as parental schooling level rose; thus, Black-White skills gaps (particularly in math and reading) remained largest among children with better-educated parents (see Figures 15-17).

To demonstrate, among families earning less than \$90,000, Black-White gaps in math, reading, and science ranged from 14.07-6.23 points (0.67-0.30 SDs), with both low- and middle-income Black students lagging behind White students. For example, at a \$30,000 income level, Blacks scored 0.53 SD, 0.47 SD, and 0.49 SD lower in math, reading, and science, respectively, and among families earning \$60,000, Blacks fell behind by 0.39 SD in math, 0.31 SD in reading,

and 0.41 SD in science. In fact, by grade 8, only among children from highly-affluent families did Black students equal or exceed their White peers in academic achievement. More precisely, at a \$100,000 income level, Black students trailed White students by 4.27 points (0.20 SD) in math, 2.28 points (0.09 SD) in reading, and 2.96 points (0.20 SD) in science. Such disparities (with Whites outpacing their Black peers) persisted in math, reading, and science until household earnings reached \$150,000, \$120,000, and \$140,000, respectively. Ultimately, among the most affluent families (i.e., with incomes \geq \$150,000), Black students eclipsed White students in achievement, with their advantages ranging from 0.63-11.41 points (0.03-0.55 SDs) in math, 4.82-20.44 points (0.19-0.79 SDs) in reading, and 1.09 -10.00 points (0.07-0.67 SDs) in science.

Consistent with the results in early and middle childhood, race gaps in math, reading, and science skills widened as parental education increased in early adolescence. By eighth grade, among students whose parents did not finish high school, Blacks scored 14.07 points (0.67 SD), 16.48 points (0.64 SD), and 11.06 points (0.74 SD) lower than Whites in math, reading, and science, respectively. In families with parents who completed high school or some college, Black students trailed White students by 18.61 points (0.89 SD) in math, 25.06 points (0.97 SD) in reading, and 17.58 points (1.17 SD) in science, though differences in math were only marginally significant. Lastly, among children whose parents held a bachelor's degree or higher, achievement disparities (with Blacks underperforming Whites) reached 21.90 points (1.05 SD), 27.10 points (1.05 SD), and 17.97 points (1.20 SD) in math, reading, and science, respectively, with only marginally-significant differences in reading. Adjusting for child and family covariates did not significantly alter these patterns of relations, though the strength of income's moderation of Black-White reading gaps diminished while the interactive effect of parental education and race on reading skills grew stronger (see Table 6, Model 5).

Table 3. Moderation of Black-White achievement gaps by family SES at kindergarten entry

	Math				Reading				Science			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	Unadjusted Interactions		Child and Family Covariates		Unadjusted Interactions		Child and Family Covariates		Unadjusted Interactions		Child and Family Covariates	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Black	-0.50	0.53	0.37	0.57	-0.75	0.77	0.71	0.80	-3.60***	0.90	-2.15*	0.84
Income	0.14***	0.02	0.15***	0.02	0.16***	0.03	0.16***	0.03	0.13***	0.02	0.13***	0.01
HS/Some College	4.70***	0.48	4.44***	0.46	4.00***	0.48	3.61***	0.46	3.97***	0.65	3.65***	0.60
Bachelor	8.40***	0.51	7.92***	0.48	8.05***	0.56	7.44***	0.51	7.62***	0.69	7.04***	0.64
Black × Income	0.33***	0.08	0.32***	0.08	0.49**	0.16	0.41*	0.16	0.26**	0.09	0.19*	0.09
Black × HS/Some College	-3.30***	0.68	-3.14***	0.59	-2.22**	0.75	-2.18**	0.71	-2.71**	0.98	-2.73**	0.84
Black × Bachelor's	-6.21***	0.78	-6.02***	0.76	-4.13***	1.15	-4.11***	1.12	-4.92***	0.89	-4.87***	0.83
Age			0.44***	0.02			0.39***	0.02			0.44***	0.02
Male			-0.19	0.16			-1.61***	0.17			0.11	0.18
Normal birth weight			1.38***	0.22			0.97**	0.30			0.93***	0.22
Married			1.05***	0.21			1.37***	0.27			1.26***	0.21
Number of children			-0.51***	0.08			-0.98***	0.09			-0.82***	0.07
Number of adults			-0.51***	0.12			-0.38*	0.15			-0.20	0.14
Work under 35 hours			0.30	0.22			-0.28	0.28			0.52*	0.22
Work over 35 hours			-0.31+	0.16			-0.80***	0.22			-0.43*	0.19
Child health			1.83**	0.62			1.91*	0.76			1.56**	0.54
Intercept	14.38***	0.43	-17.40***	1.45	16.93***	0.49	-9.25***	1.87	18.71***	0.64	-12.17***	1.35

Note. Coef. = Coefficient; S.E. = Standard Error. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. + $p < .10$.

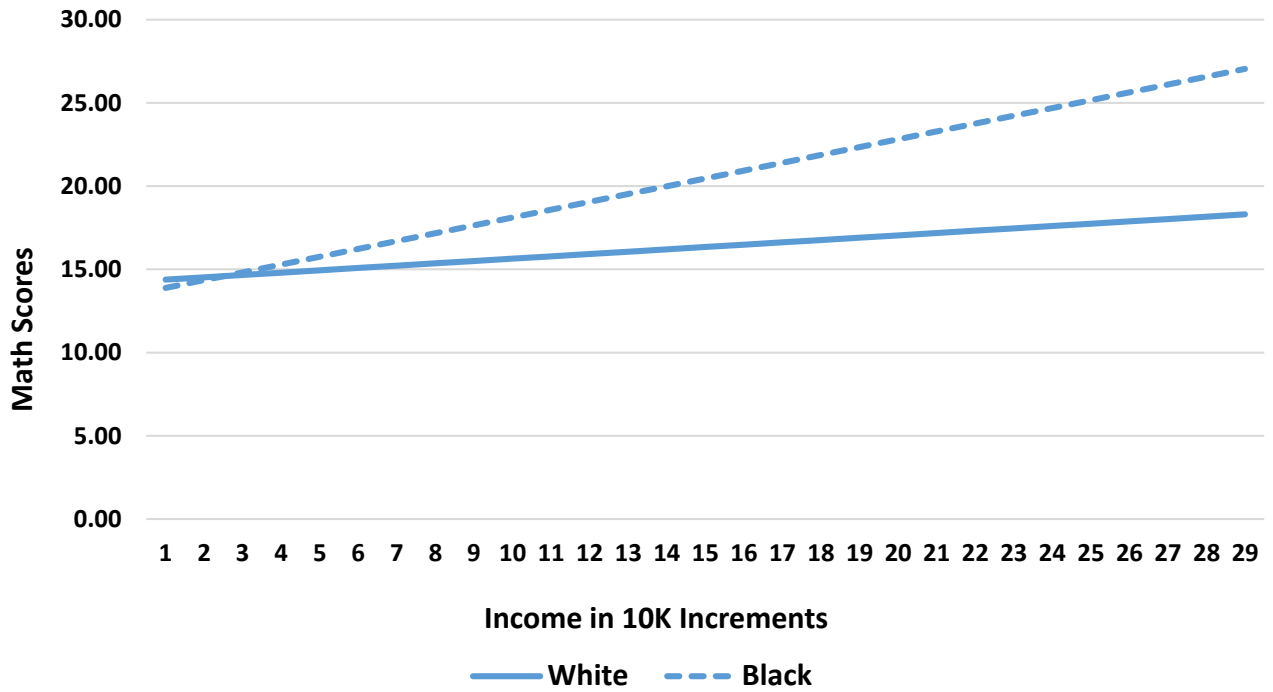


Figure 2. Black-White math achievement gaps by household income at kindergarten entry

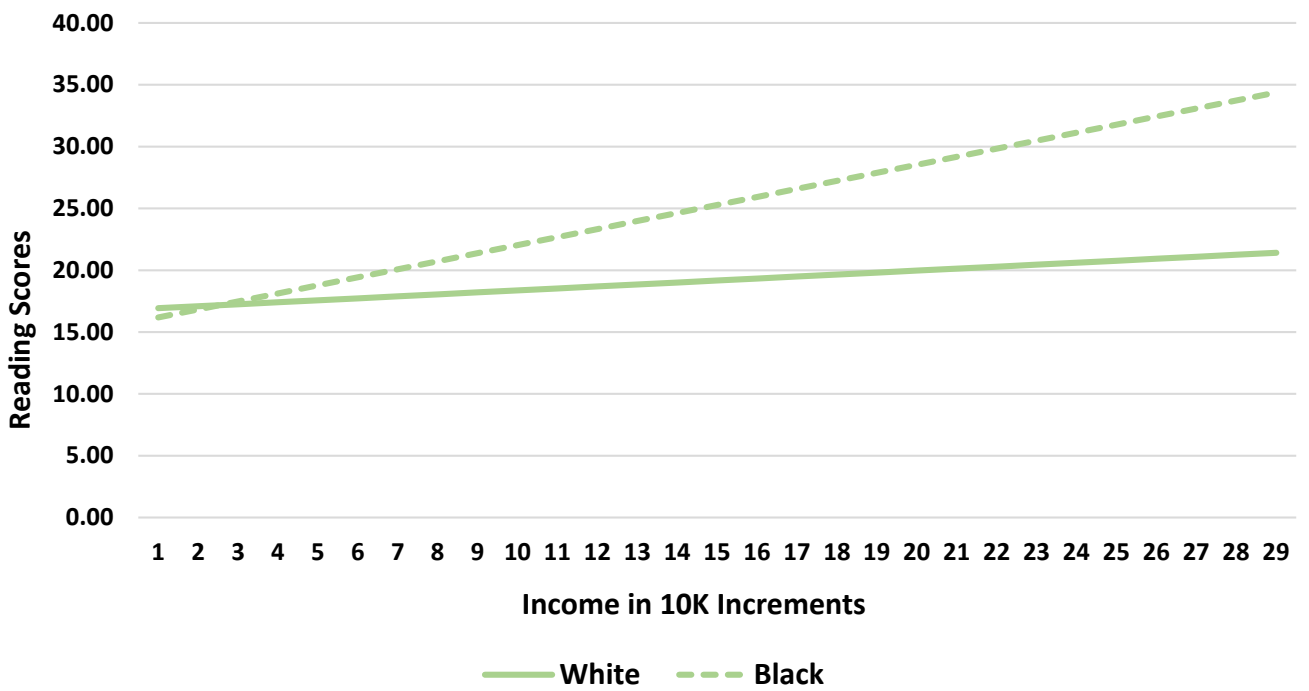


Figure 3. Black-White reading achievement gaps by household income at kindergarten entry

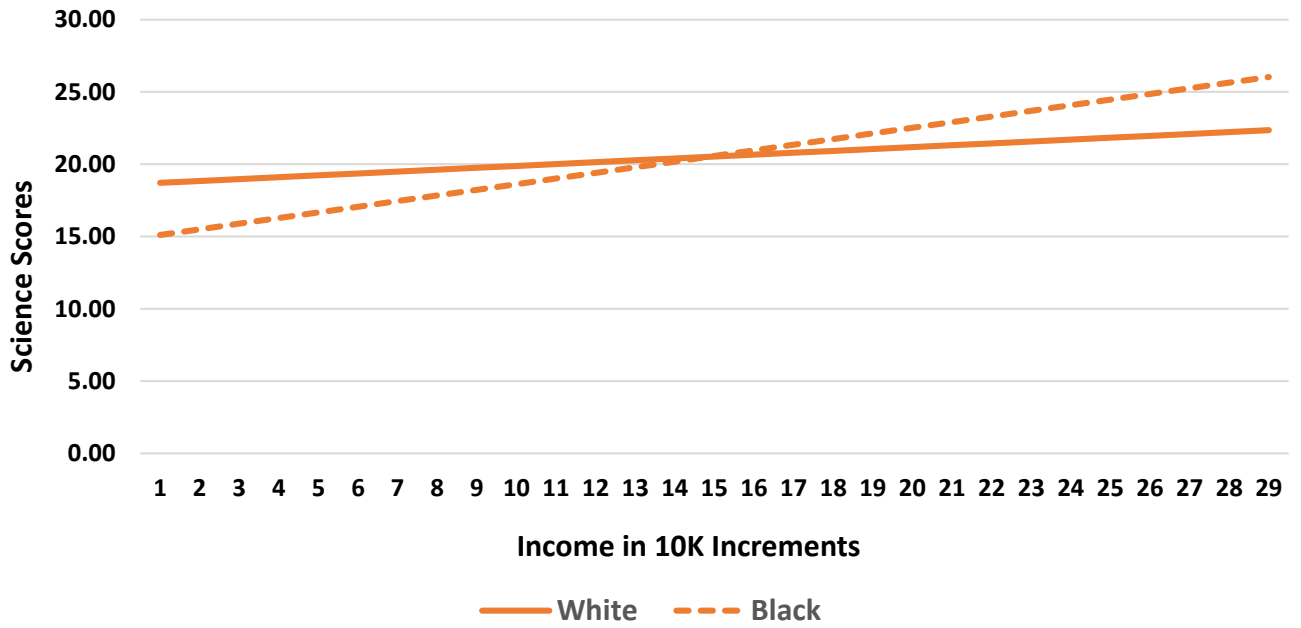


Figure 4. Black-White science achievement gaps by household income at kindergarten entry

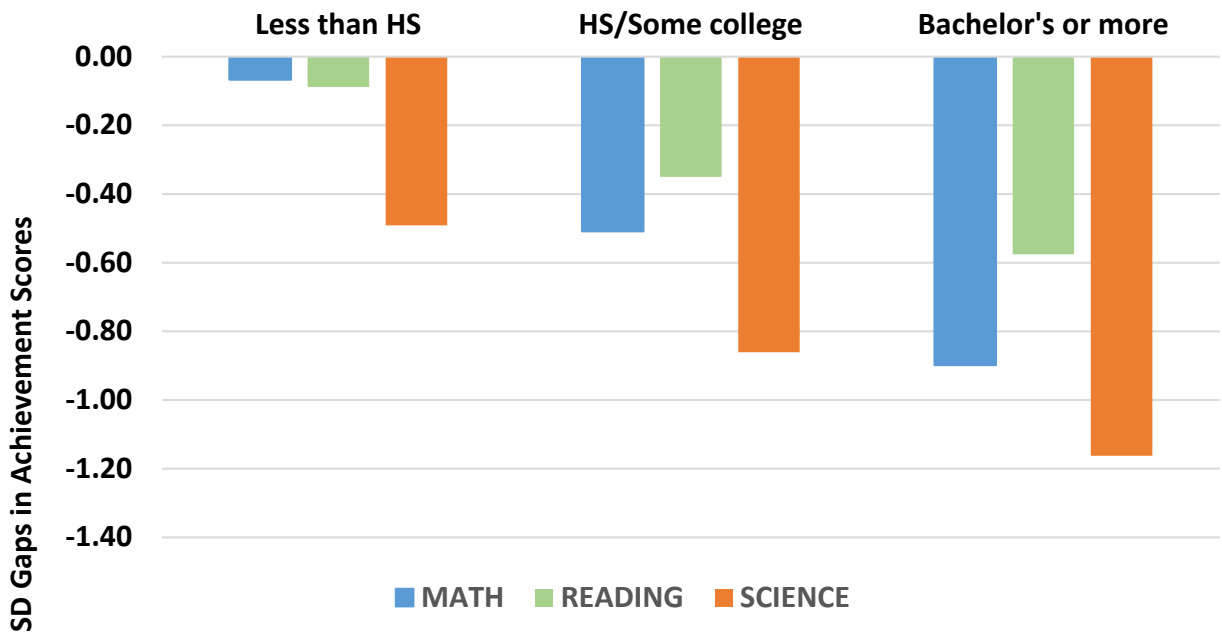


Figure 5. Black-White math, reading, and science achievement gaps by parental education level at kindergarten entry

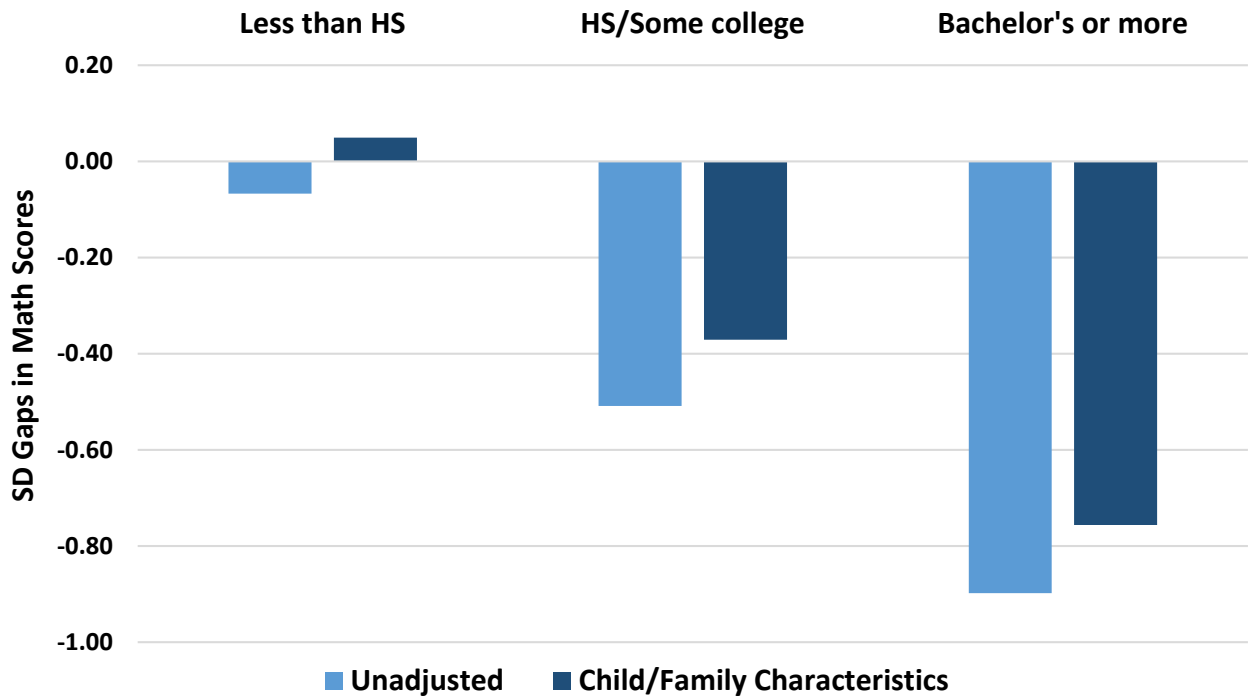


Figure 6. Adjusted Black-White math achievement gaps by parental education at kindergarten entry

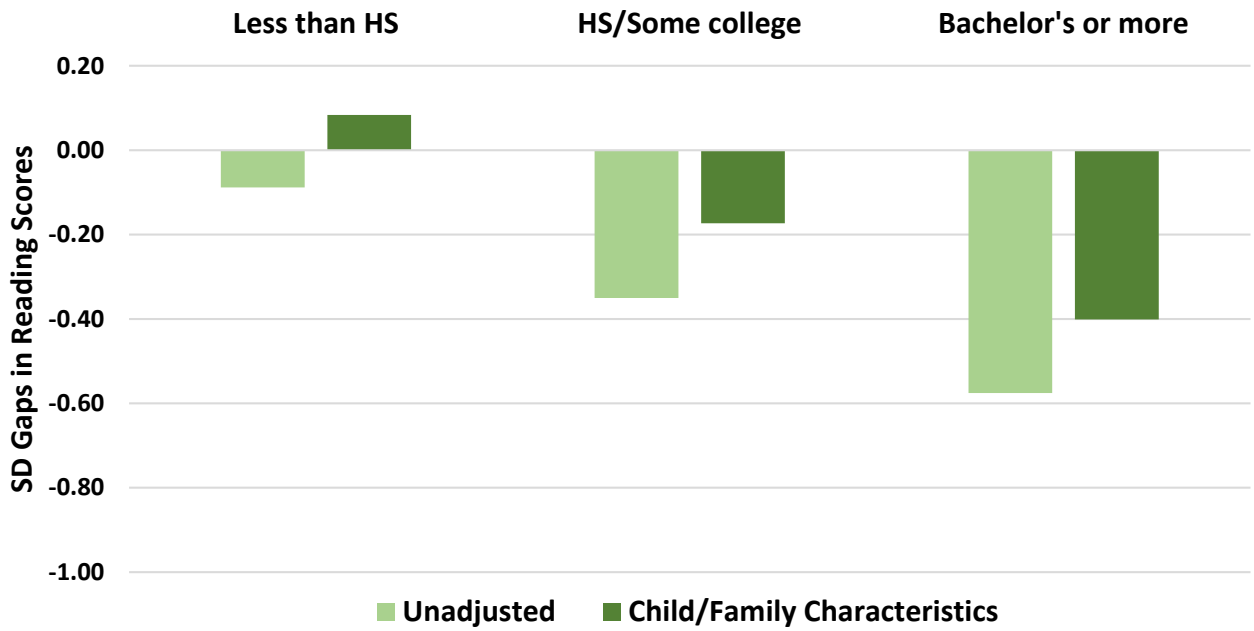


Figure 7. Adjusted Black-White reading achievement gaps by parental education at kindergarten entry

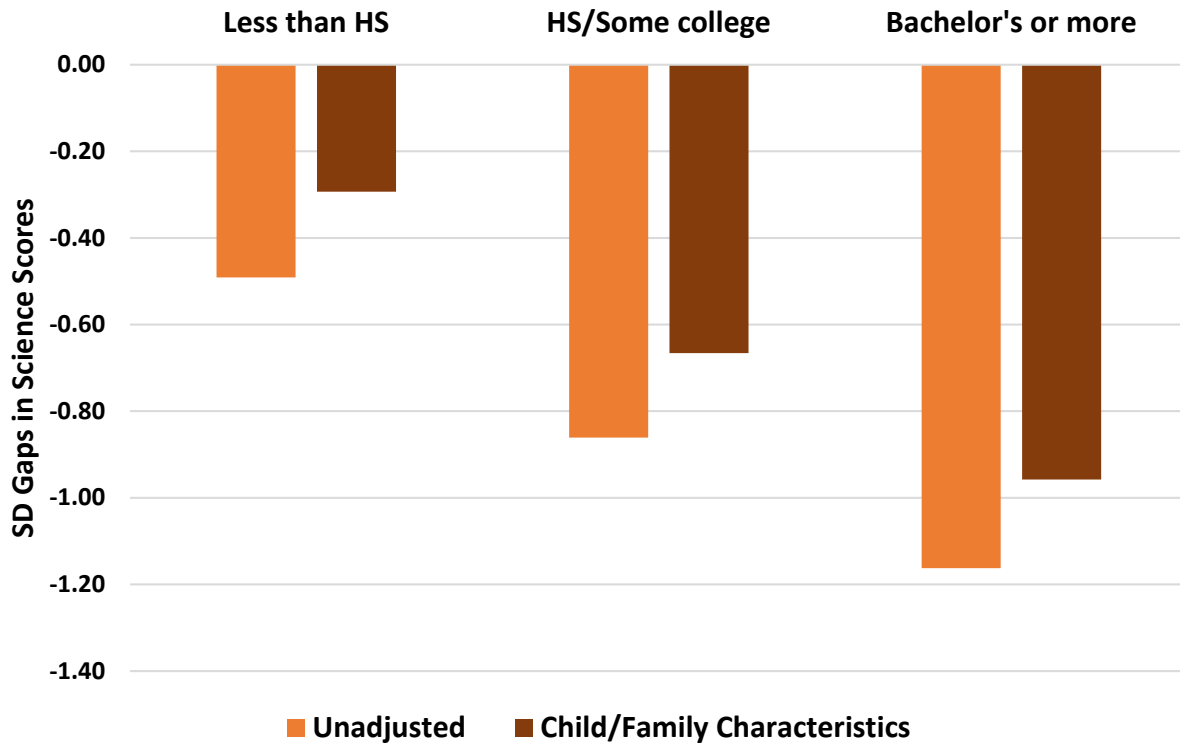


Figure 8. Adjusted Black-White science achievement gaps by parental education at kindergarten entry

Table 4. Moderation of Black-White achievement gaps by family SES in the spring of third grade

	Math						Reading						Science					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8		Model 9	
	Unadjusted		Child and Family		Covariates and		Unadjusted		Child and Family		Covariates and		Unadjusted		Child and Family		Covariates and	
	Interactions		Covariates		Baseline Scores		Interactions		Covariates		Baseline Scores		Interactions		Covariates		Baseline Scores	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Black	-6.45**	2.32	-4.52+	2.36	-4.49*	2.22	-4.80*	2.30	-2.04	2.30	-3.22	2.12	-6.99***	1.56	-5.09***	1.53	-3.37**	1.16
Income	0.47***	0.05	0.47***	0.05	0.11**	0.04	0.49***	0.06	0.47***	0.06	0.22***	0.05	0.14***	0.03	0.14***	0.03	-0.02	0.03
HS/Some College	10.52***	1.32	9.96***	1.32	4.83***	1.13	13.23***	1.56	12.16***	1.65	9.05***	1.57	4.85***	0.73	4.64***	0.80	1.89***	0.58
Bachelor	17.19***	1.28	16.17***	1.28	6.84***	1.08	21.50***	1.60	19.99***	1.74	13.49***	1.67	8.87***	0.76	8.42***	0.83	3.10***	0.63
Black × Income	0.93***	0.27	0.81**	0.30	0.36	0.25	1.06***	0.29	0.84**	0.29	0.51+	0.29	0.57***	0.16	0.46**	0.16	0.24*	0.11
Black × HS/Some College	-8.03***	2.19	-7.94***	2.08	-4.09*	1.72	-9.11***	2.40	-8.98***	2.28	-6.65**	2.07	-3.23**	1.30	-3.56**	1.23	-0.92	0.93
Black × Bachelor's	-10.78***	2.70	-10.68***	2.64	-3.92*	1.97	-11.90***	2.54	-11.72***	2.30	-8.19***	1.96	-4.98***	1.49	-5.35***	1.41	-1.15	1.04
Age			0.36***	0.05	-0.27***	0.04			0.31***	0.06	-0.08	0.05			0.27***	0.03	-0.09***	0.02
Male			2.82***	0.39	3.12***	0.31			-3.82***	0.40	-2.24***	0.35			1.98***	0.21	1.87***	0.17
Normal birth weight			3.70***	0.62	1.67**	0.52			1.34*	0.66	0.29	0.59			0.64+	0.38	-0.16	0.29
Stably married			2.25**	0.70	1.38*	0.55			3.22***	0.64	2.07***	0.57			1.80***	0.30	1.19***	0.24
Number of children			-0.68***	0.20	0.06	0.18			-1.95***	0.25	-0.94***	0.21			-0.98***	0.11	-0.25**	0.09
Number of adults			-1.43***	0.43	-0.90*	0.31			-1.12*	0.45	-0.82*	0.40			-0.41*	0.18	-0.31+	0.16
Work under 35 hours			1.99***	0.51	1.01*	0.44			1.30*	0.56	1.26*	0.48			0.14	0.27	-0.33	0.21
Work over 35 hours			0.84	0.52	1.04*	0.40			-0.47	0.60	-0.05	0.54			-0.31	0.28	-0.11	0.21
Child health			6.83**	2.09	3.66*	1.56			8.37***	2.34	7.10***	1.93			3.34***	0.94	1.26+	0.74
Baseline achievement					1.43*	0.03					1.01***	0.03					0.83***	0.01
Intercept	72.62***	1.31	23.93***	5.65	75.54*	4.74	92.69***	1.68	56.29***	5.96	80.61***	5.53	30.22***	0.74	-3.16	3.03	22.91***	2.47

Note. Coef. = Coefficient; S.E. = Standard Error. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. + $p < .10$.

Table 5. Moderation of Black-White achievement gaps by family SES in the spring of fifth grade

	Math						Reading						Science					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8		Model 9	
	Unadjusted Interactions		Child and Family Covariates		Covariates and Baseline Scores		Unadjusted Interactions		Child and Family Covariates		Covariates and Baseline Scores		Unadjusted Interactions		Child and Family Covariates		Covariates and Baseline Scores	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Black	-12.29***	2.69	-9.67**	3.18	-11.09***	2.68	-9.71*	4.22	-5.66	4.54	-6.90+	3.94	-6.98***	1.58	-5.38***	1.60	-5.58***	1.15
Income	0.59***	0.06	0.57***	0.05	0.15***	0.04	0.58***	0.07	0.56***	0.06	0.27***	0.06	0.46***	0.05	0.43***	0.04	0.05	0.03
HS/Some College	14.60***	1.81	13.92***	2.02	7.08***	1.82	15.28***	1.97	14.52***	2.04	10.62***	1.70	10.09***	0.62	8.43***	0.54	3.58***	0.54
Bachelor	22.68***	1.78	21.65***	1.99	10.49***	1.76	24.41***	1.92	23.40***	2.01	16.25***	1.67	15.73***	0.68	13.54***	0.61	5.78***	0.59
Black × Income	1.09**	0.38	0.90*	0.41	0.56	0.36	1.39***	0.36	1.15**	0.39	0.85*	0.39	0.71***	0.20	0.58**	0.19	0.48***	0.14
Black × HS/Some College	-6.09**	2.18	-6.33**	2.41	-0.97	2.01	-8.81*	3.41	-10.02**	3.49	-7.45*	3.21	-4.67***	1.28	-4.84***	1.22	-0.90	1.06
Black × Bachelor's	-9.52*	4.13	-10.07*	4.32	-2.08	3.26	-12.87**	4.02	-14.59***	3.93	-10.99**	3.49	-7.54***	1.85	-8.08***	1.86	-1.76	1.35
Age			0.19**	0.06	-0.51***	0.05			0.24***	0.06	-0.17**	0.06			0.32***	0.03	-0.23***	0.03
Male			3.37***	0.55	3.77***	0.44			-3.60***	0.56	-1.80***	0.50			3.30***	0.28	3.15***	0.22
Normal birth weight			4.62***	0.98	2.50**	0.81			2.28*	0.91	1.18	0.79			1.09*	0.47	0.10	0.38
Stably married			2.08*	0.86	0.91	0.77			2.43**	0.78	1.14	0.69			2.35***	0.42	1.48***	0.33
Number of children			-1.07***	0.24	-0.25	0.21			-2.16***	0.29	-1.13***	0.25			-1.73***	0.16	-0.71***	0.12
Number of adults			-1.32*	0.65	-0.55	0.54			-1.20+	0.66	-0.64	0.57			-1.59***	0.24	-0.51**	0.19
Work under 35 hours			1.98*	0.85	1.23+	0.70			1.64+	0.93	1.78*	0.84			1.89***	0.44	0.91**	0.33
Work over 35 hours			0.66	0.74	1.19+	0.64			-0.00	0.79	0.93	0.72			0.78*	0.34	0.82**	0.28
Child health			6.36	4.38	3.32	3.16			11.14*	5.28	8.71+	4.55			4.07***	1.05	2.13*	0.85
Baseline achievement					1.60***	0.04					1.12***	0.04					1.14***	0.02
Intercept	96.47***	1.98	62.41***	8.51	135.94***	7.24	121.86**	2.08	84.36	10.69	120.46***	10.10	44.68***	0.65	2.32	4.65	56.54***	3.54

Note. Coef. = Coefficient; S.E. = Standard Error. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. + $p < .10$.

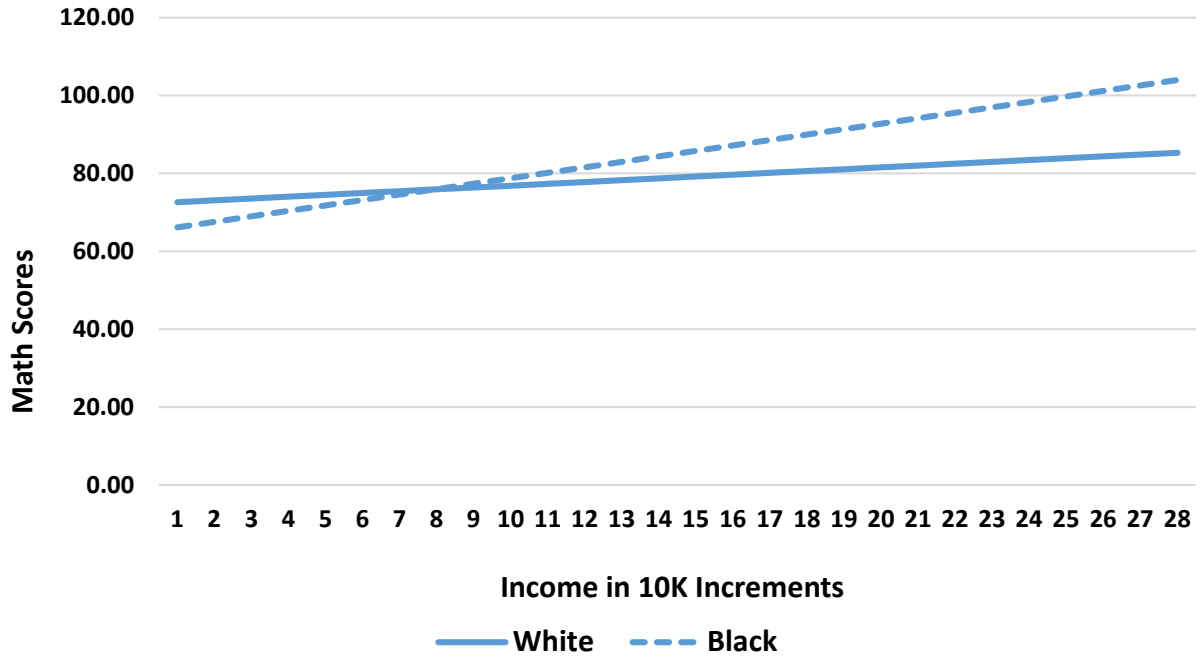


Figure 9. Black-White math achievement gaps by household income in the spring of third grade

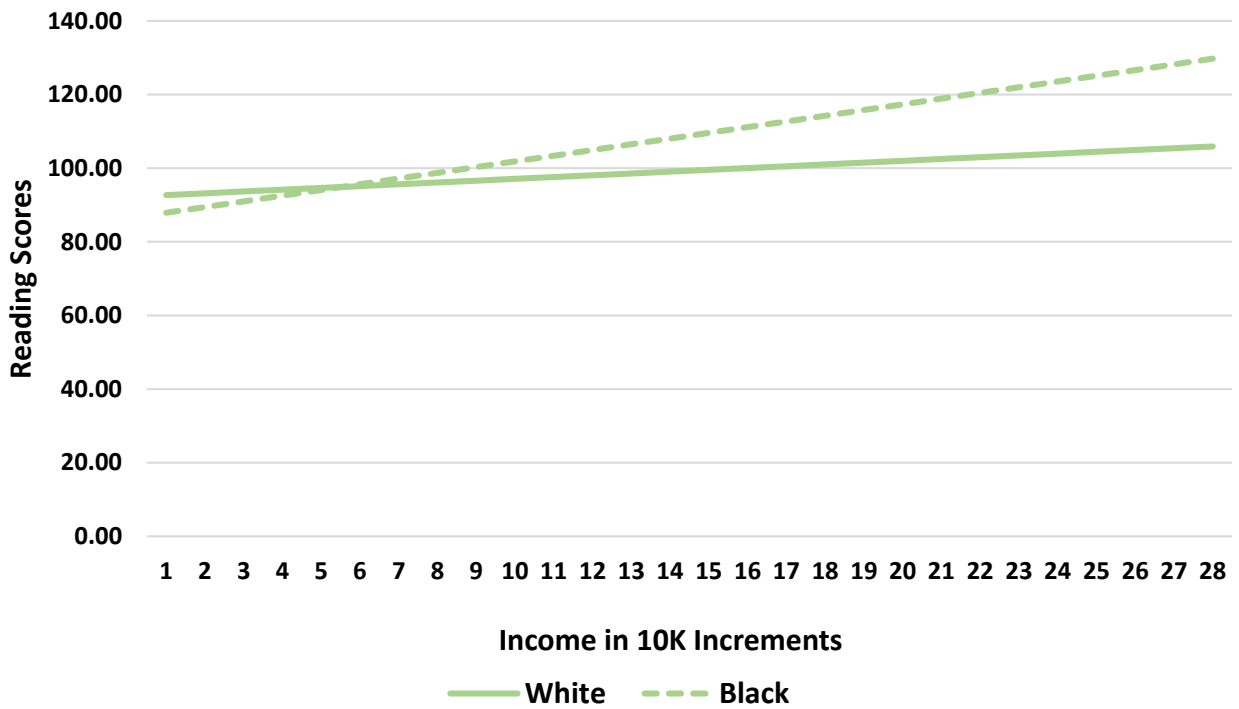


Figure 10. Black-White reading achievement gaps by household income in the spring of third grade

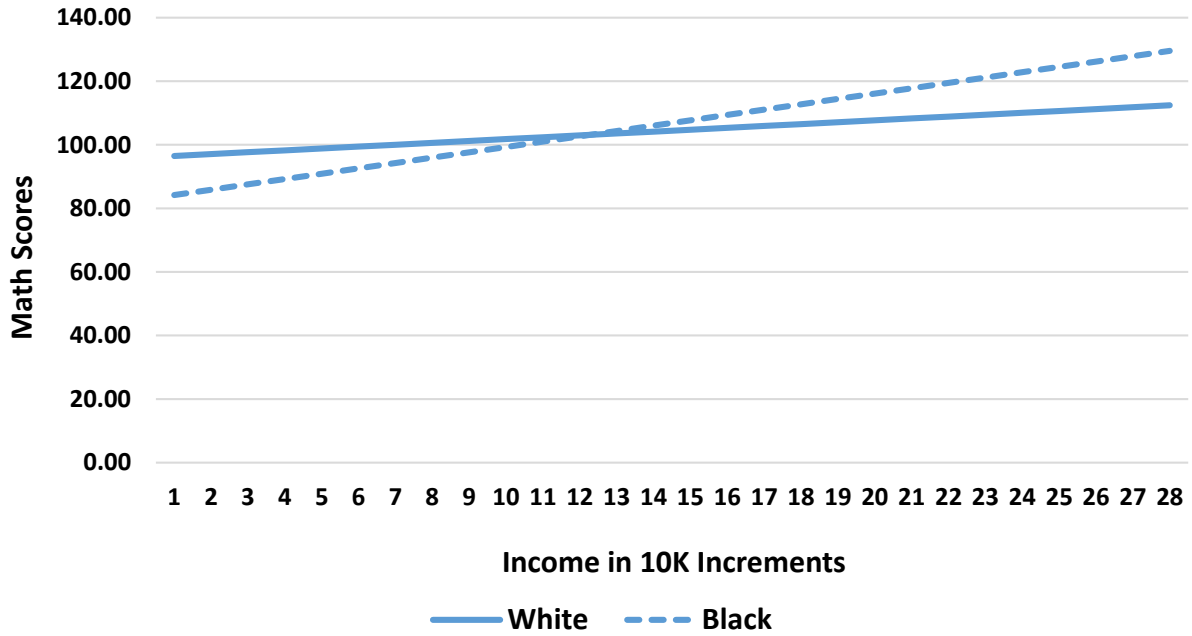


Figure 11. Black-White math achievement gaps by household income in the spring of fifth grade

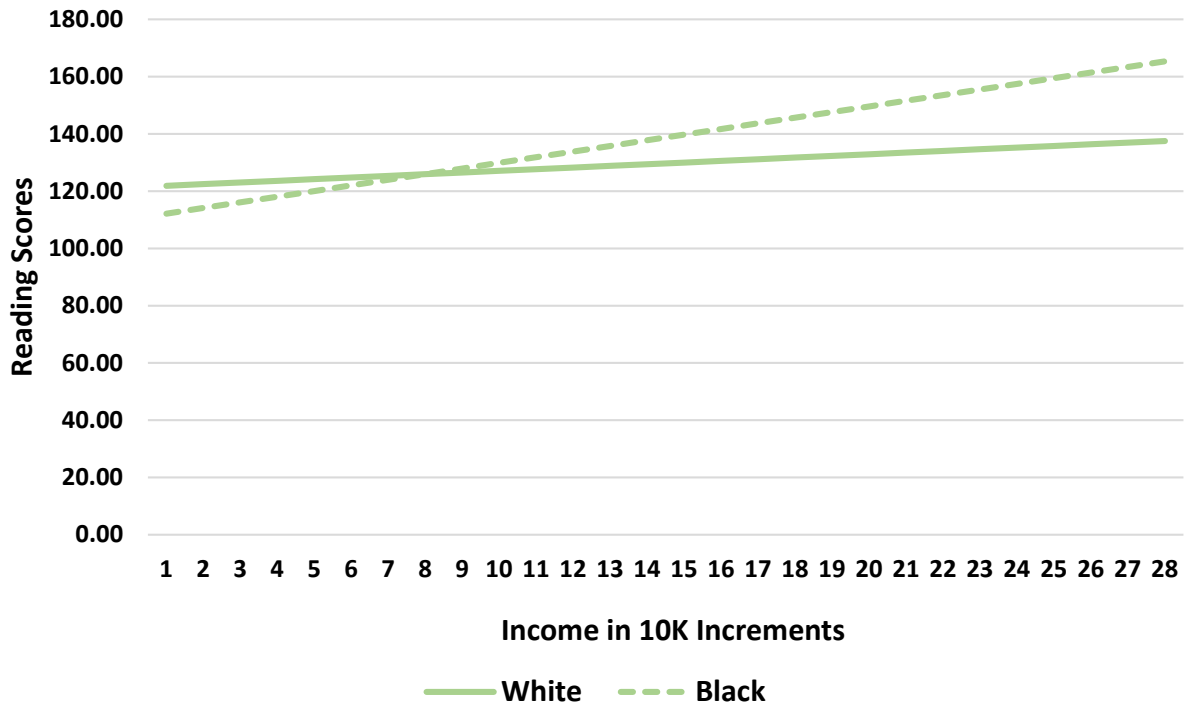


Figure 12. Black-White reading achievement gaps by household income in the spring of fifth grade

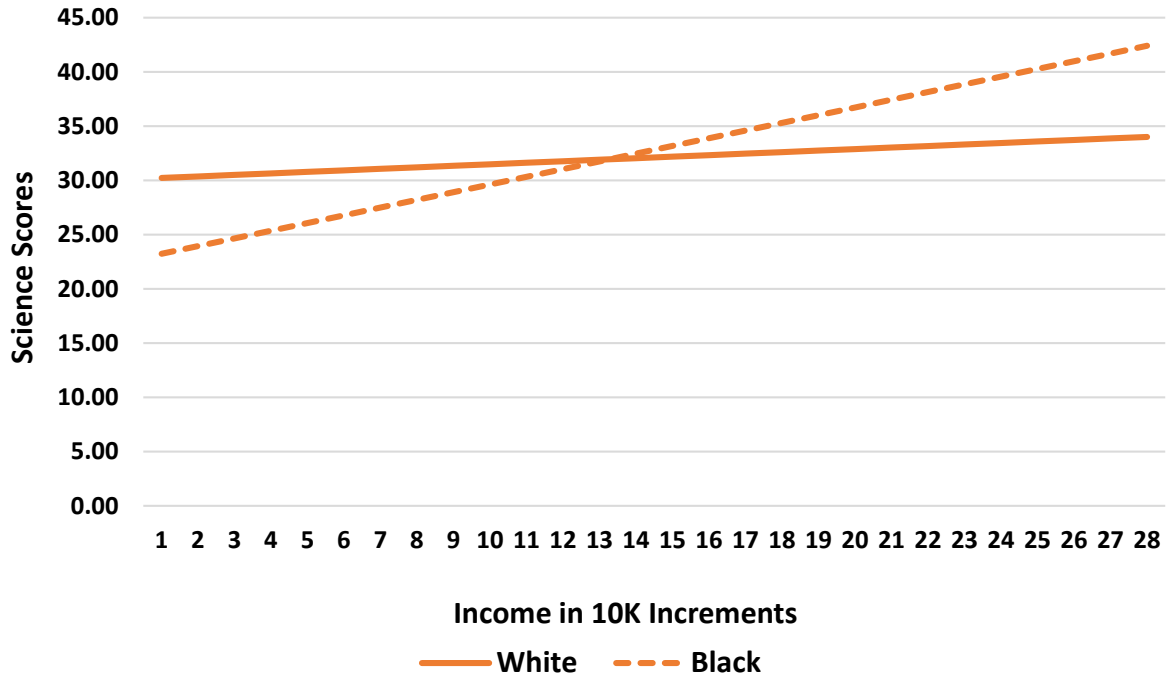


Figure 13. Black-White science achievement gaps by household income in the spring of third grade

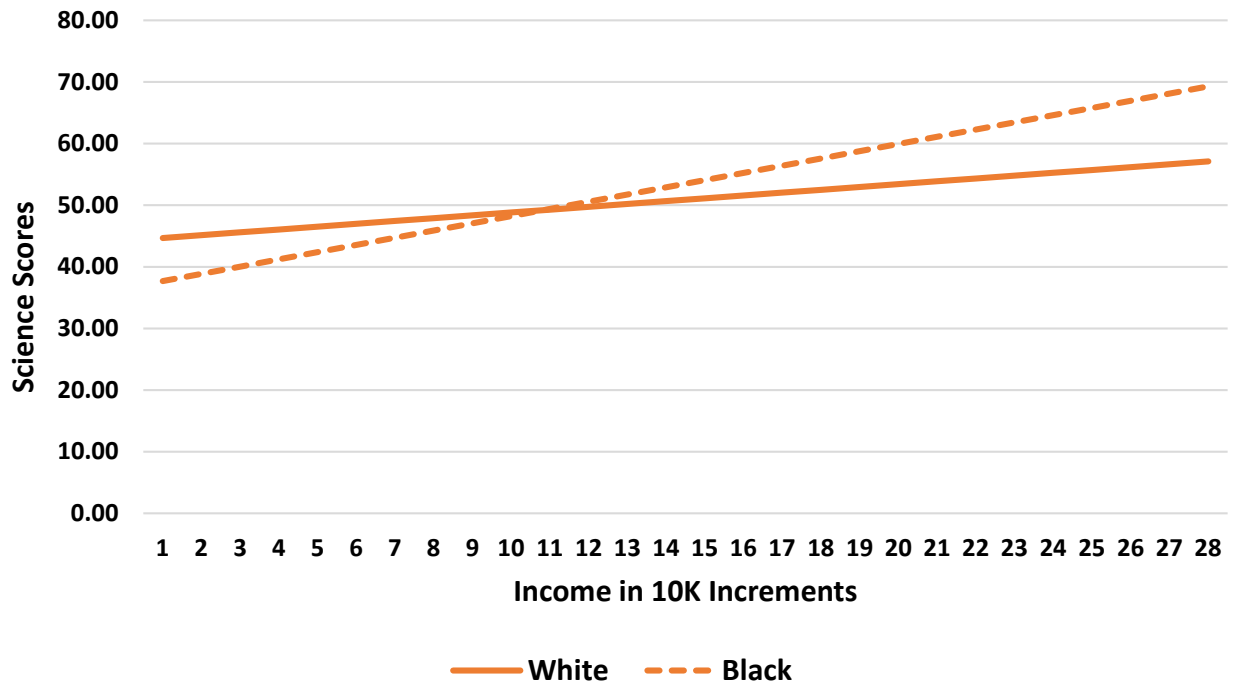


Figure 14. Black-White science achievement gaps by household income in the spring of fifth grade

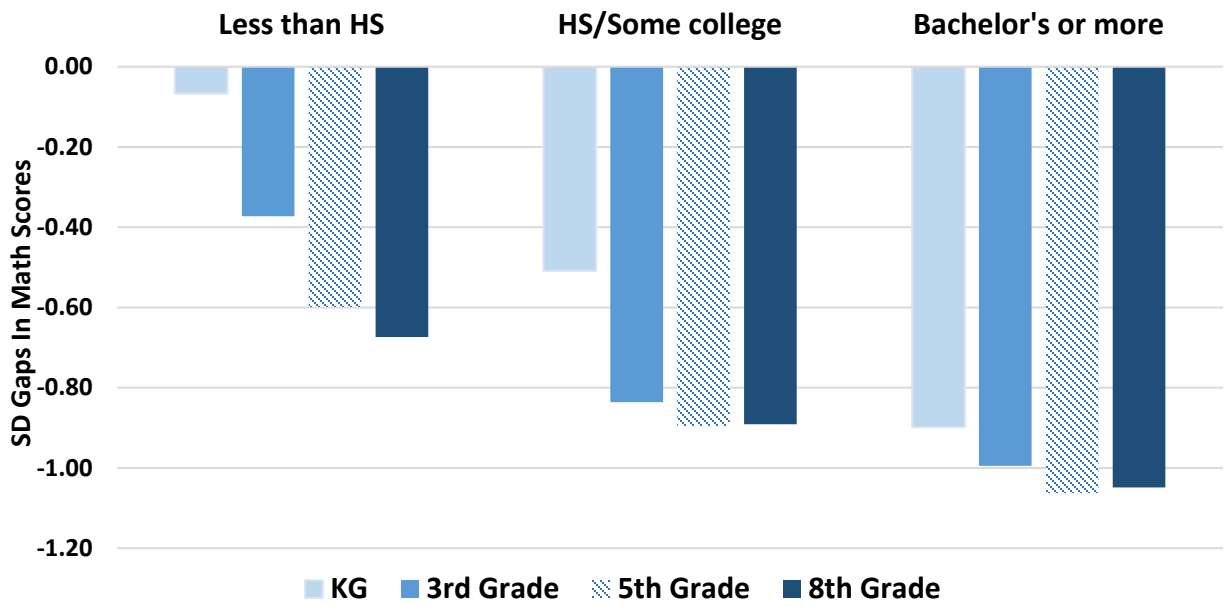


Figure 15. Black-White math achievement gaps by parental education across primary school

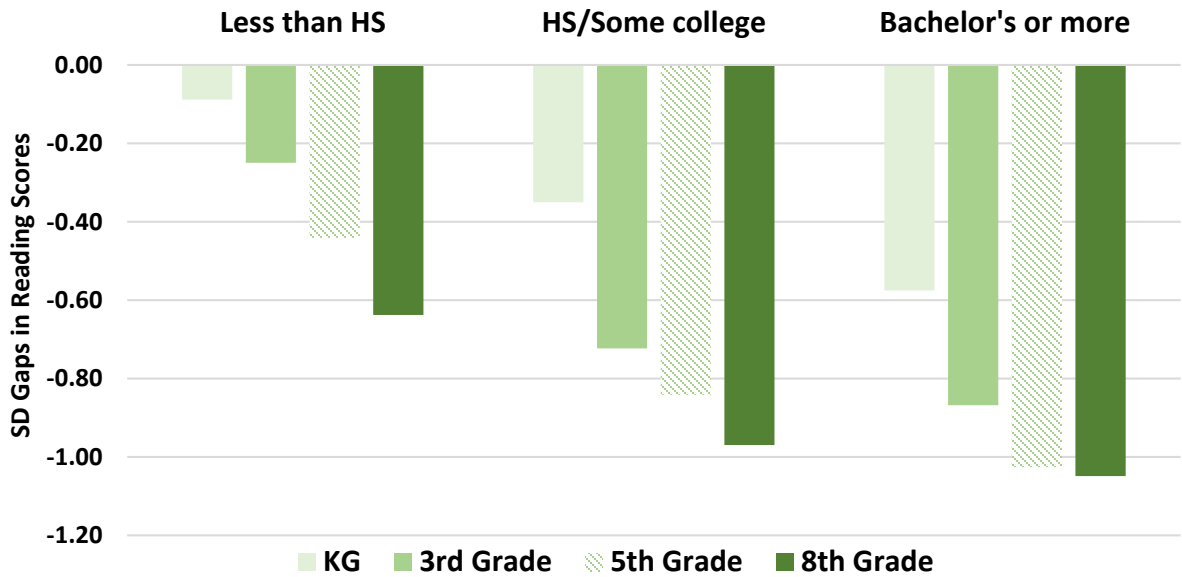


Figure 16. Black-White reading achievement gaps by parental education across primary school

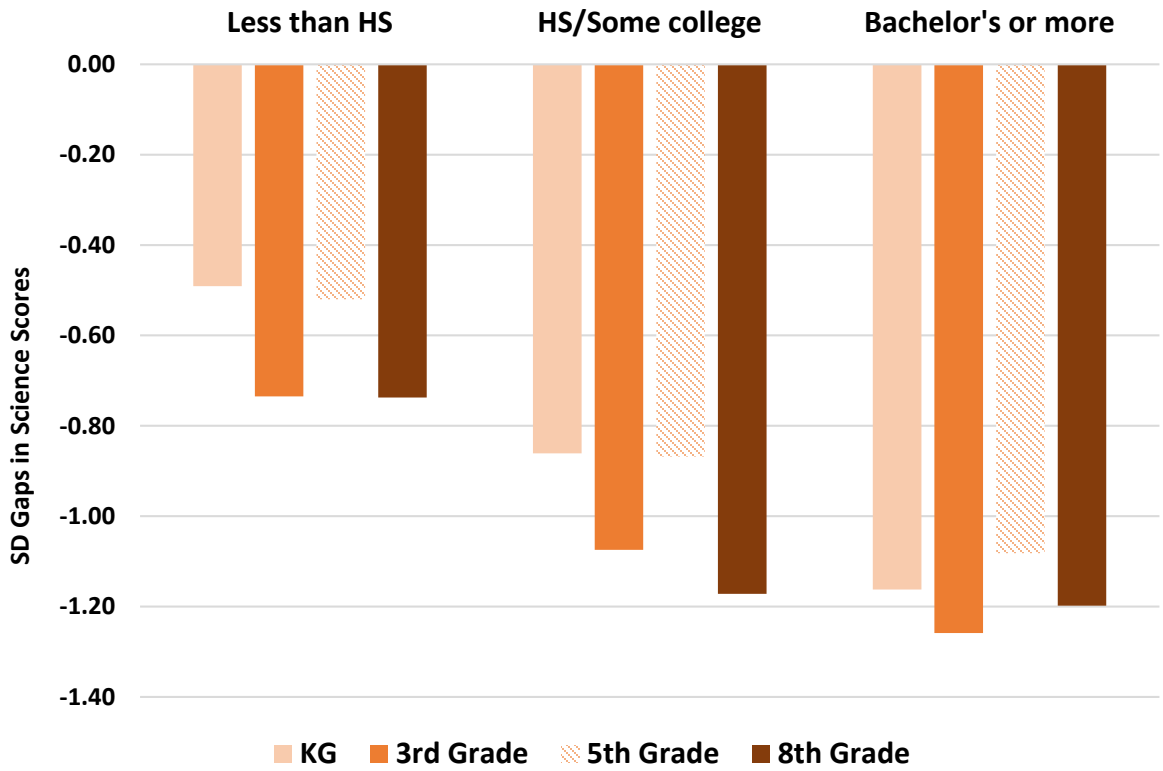


Figure 17. Black-White science achievement gaps by parental education across primary school

Table 6. Moderation of Black-White Achievement gaps by family SES in the spring of eighth grade

	Math						Reading						Science					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8		Model 9	
	Unadjusted Interactions		Child and Family Covariates		Covariates and Baseline Scores		Unadjusted Interactions		Child and Family Covariates		Covariates and Baseline Scores		Unadjusted Interactions		Child and Family Covariates		Covariates and Baseline Scores	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Black	-14.07***	2.43	-11.90***	2.61	-10.77***	2.20	-16.48***	4.47	-12.65**	4.68	-12.77**	4.27	-11.06***	2.69	-9.15**	2.87	-5.83**	2.14
Income	0.67***	0.06	0.65***	0.06	0.25***	0.05	0.75***	0.07	0.72***	0.07	0.44***	0.07	0.39***	0.05	0.37***	0.05	0.14***	0.04
HS/Some College	13.71***	2.20	12.13***	2.23	7.04***	2.06	16.47***	2.80	15.50***	2.78	12.85***	2.40	12.17***	2.06	11.38***	2.06	8.40***	1.55
Bachelor	22.08***	2.19	20.15***	2.25	11.29***	2.04	27.24***	2.87	26.17***	2.90	20.71***	2.51	17.76***	2.08	16.75***	2.08	11.09***	1.53
Black × Income	0.98**	0.33	0.72*	0.35	0.36	0.30	1.42*	0.54	1.12+	0.58	0.83	0.57	0.81***	0.22	0.62*	0.24	0.38+	0.20
Black × HS/Some College	-4.54+	2.55	-4.06	2.75	-1.21	2.19	-8.58*	3.66	-9.56**	3.53	-8.18**	3.05	-6.52*	2.63	-6.47*	2.69	-4.26*	1.99
Black × Bachelor's	-7.83*	3.47	-7.47*	3.62	-1.65	2.80	-10.62+	5.53	-11.50*	5.37	-9.17+	4.90	-6.91*	3.45	-7.10*	3.50	-2.87	2.54
Age			0.03	0.07	-0.60***	0.07			0.15*	0.07	-0.24***	0.07			0.07	0.05	-0.38***	0.04
Male			1.60**	0.56	1.94***	0.44			-5.88***	0.73	-4.07***	0.67			2.31***	0.38	2.29***	0.36
Normal birth weight			2.34*	0.93	0.28	0.84			1.10	1.15	-0.04	1.03			2.18**	0.74	1.30*	0.61
Stably married			2.79**	1.03	1.84*	0.86			2.40+	1.24	0.95	1.13			1.75*	0.74	1.10+	0.63
Number of children			-0.28	0.37	0.29	0.38			-1.41***	0.40	-0.55	0.38			-0.91***	0.25	-0.20	0.25
Number of adults			-0.38	0.79	0.26	0.67			0.04	0.88	0.73	0.84			-0.45	0.49	-0.08	0.45
Work under 35 hours			3.06**	0.97	2.57***	0.77			3.24*	1.26	3.52***	1.05			1.42+	0.73	0.47	0.69
Work over 35 hours			2.23*	1.09	2.61**	0.88			2.06+	1.19	2.88**	1.04			0.75	0.77	0.37	0.71
Child health			9.22	5.84	6.39	4.57			3.93	6.64	2.76	6.01			4.97	4.45	2.98	3.64
Baseline achievement					1.43***	0.04					1.02***	0.04					1.00***	0.04
Intercept	123.55***	2.16	104.52***	12.97	194.57***	12.49	149.80***	2.94	121.94***	14.19	169.05***	13.86	71.31***	2.31	53.43***	8.90	112.52***	7.68

Note. Coef. = Coefficient; S.E. = Standard Error. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. + $p < .10$.

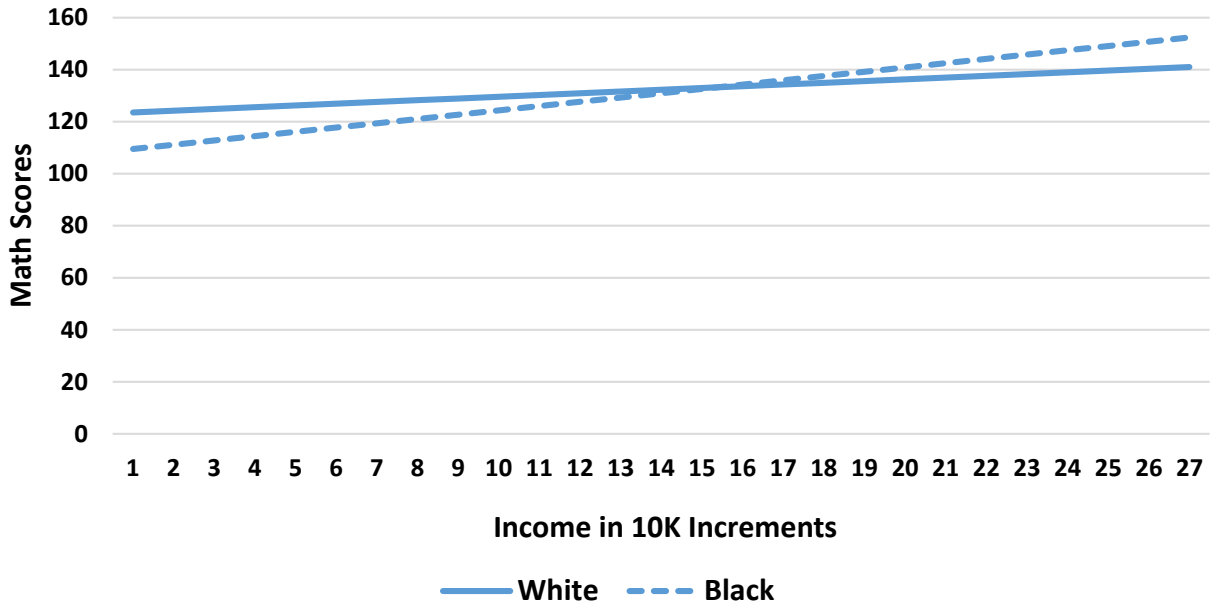


Figure 18. Black-White math achievement gaps by household income in the spring of eighth grade

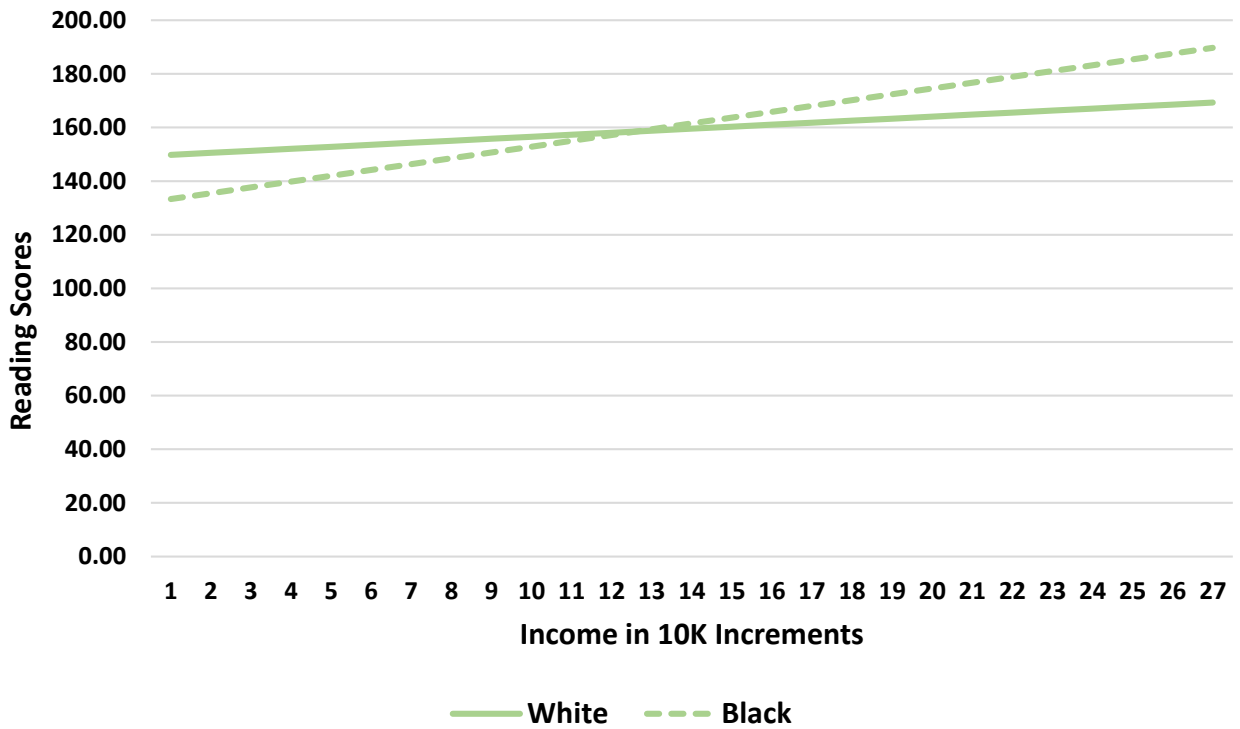


Figure 19. Black-White reading achievement gaps by household income in the spring of eighth grade

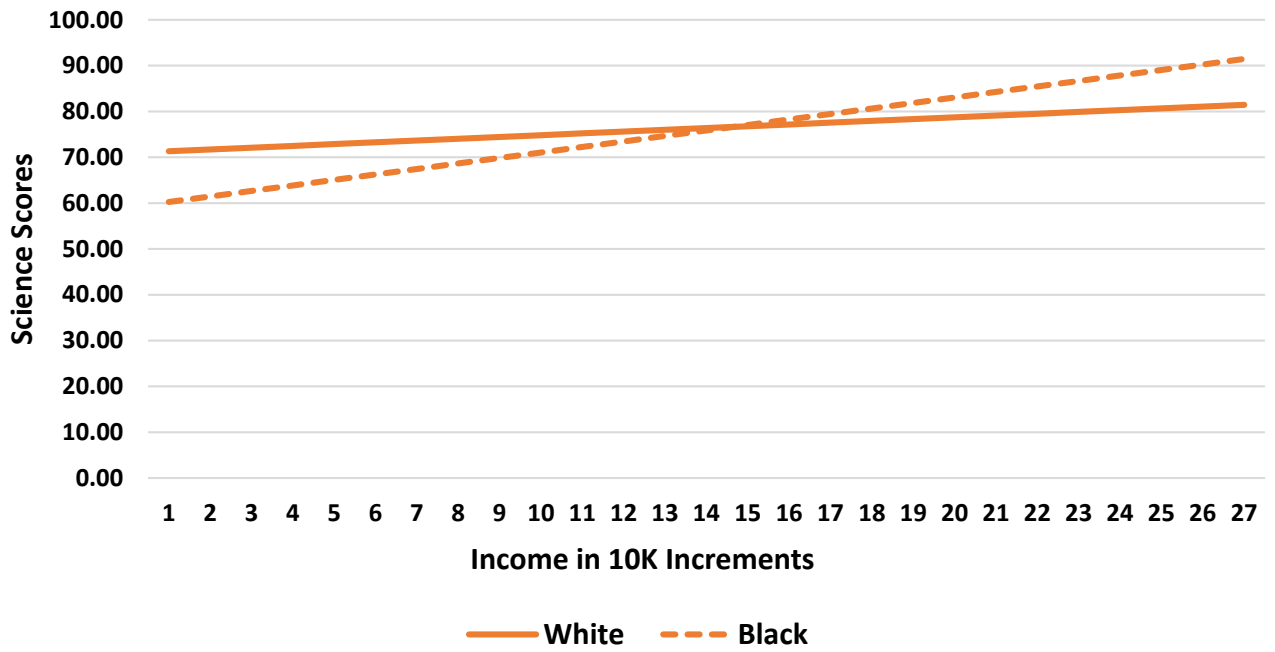


Figure 20. Black-White science achievement gaps by household income in the spring of eighth grade

2.4.2.3 Do differences in early childhood skills explain why SES moderates Black-White achievement gaps across middle childhood and early adolescence?

Models 3, 6, and 9 in Tables 4-6 report the analyses testing whether children's math, reading, and science scores at kindergarten entry accounted for within-SES race gaps later in development. After children's baseline scores were added to the adjusted models, the interaction reflecting the joint effect of race and income on math performance in grades 3, 5, and 8 became non-significant. Differences in early skills explained smaller proportions of the Black-White disparities evident at each level of parental schooling in third grade (see Figure 21): Specifically, baseline scores further reduced race gaps by 0.7% among children with the least-educated parents, by 31% among students with moderately-educated parents, and by 45% among children with highly-educated parents. Yet, by grades 5 and 8, controlling for baseline achievement completely explained why Black-White math gaps varied across parent education levels (see Figures 22 and 23).

Accounting for early skills also attenuated the interactive associations between race, SES, and reading achievement, though baseline scores explained a comparatively smaller fraction of within-SES reading gaps. In these autoregressive models, the joint effect of race and income on reading decreased by about 39%, 26%, and 26% in grades 3, 5, and 8, respectively, with the interaction between race and income remaining significant only in fifth grade. Among better educated parents, those who completed high school or any post-secondary schooling, Black-White reading gaps also narrowed but, in general, continued to vary significantly (see Tables 4-6, Model 6). Moreover, as children progressed through school, baseline literacy skills accounted for a lesser share of race gaps in subsequent reading achievement among students matched on parental education, and notably, early skills also explained a larger percentage of Black-White disparities in reading among children with college-educated parents than among their

peers with less-educated parents (see Figures 24-26). For instance, in the lagged outcome models, race gaps among children whose parents completed high school or some college decreased by approximately 10%, 9%, and 6% in grades 3, 5, and 8, respectively; among students whose parents held at least a bachelor's degree, Black-White literacy gaps narrowed by about 17%, 12%, and 9% in grades 3-5. Surprisingly, among children whose parents lacked a high school degree, Black-White reading gaps grew slightly after adjusting for baseline scores, though these differences were not significant in grade 3 and 5. By eighth grade, however, baseline skills explained a paltry 0.9% of the Black-White disparities in reading at this lowest level of parental education, and these differences remained significant and sizeable at 0.49 SD.

Controlling for early achievement also reduced the joint effect of race and income on science performance by about 48% in third grade, 17% in fifth grade, and 39% in eighth grade, though the interaction remained significant in all but grade 8. Baseline skills played a prominent role in explaining why race gaps in science differed by parental schooling level (see Figures 27-29). Black-White gaps among children whose parents did not complete high school decreased by an additional 34% in third grade, increased slightly (by about 4%) in fifth grade, and declined by 36% in eighth grade. As illustrated in Model 9 in Tables 4-6, when adjusting for early achievement, race gaps ceased to vary across higher levels of educational attainment, with one exception. In grade 8, among children whose parents finished high school or some college, Black-White disparities in science diminished by 35%, but differences remained significant.

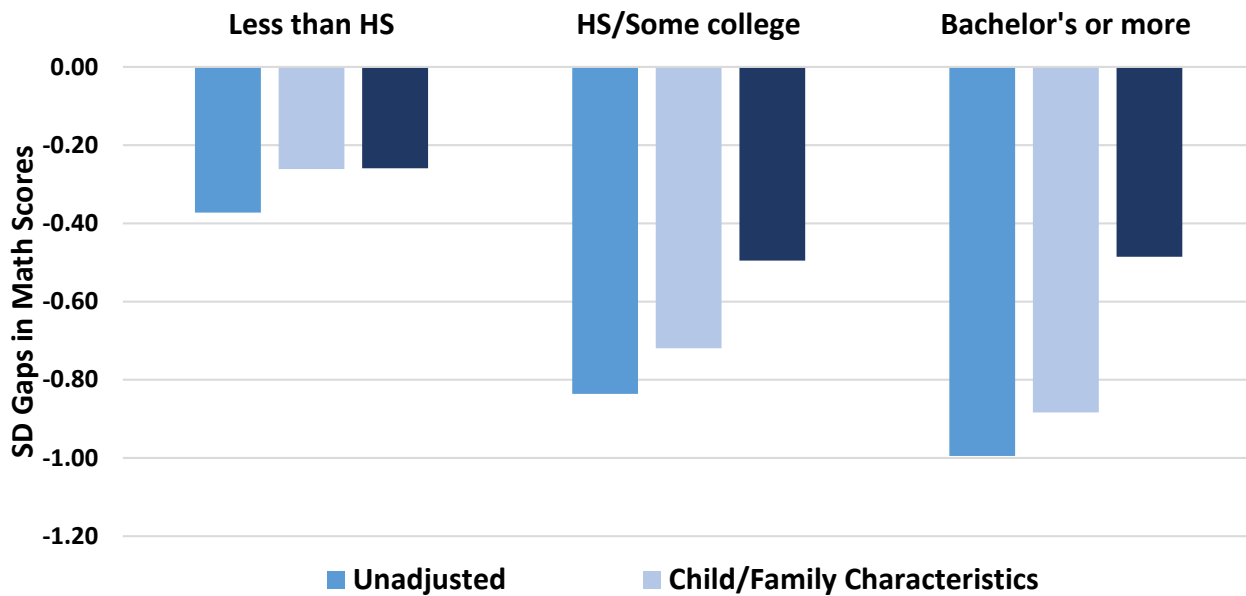


Figure 21. Adjusted Black-White math achievement gaps by parental education level in the spring of third grade

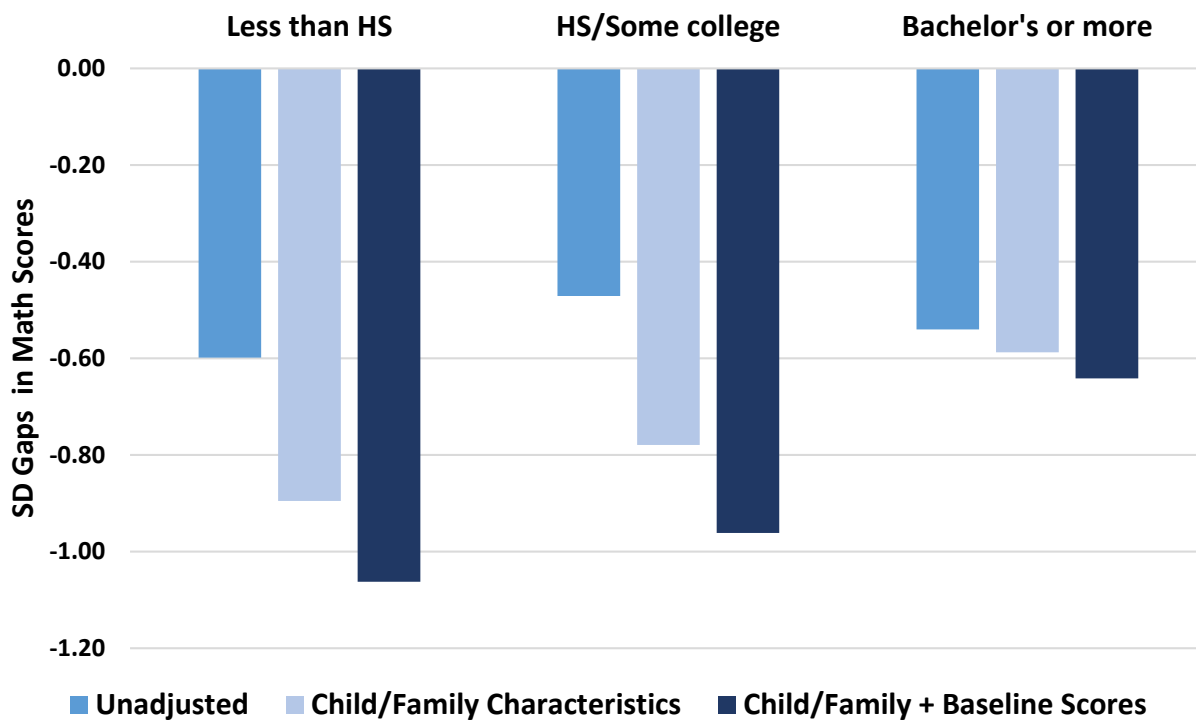


Figure 22. Adjusted Black-White math achievement gaps by parental education level in the spring of fifth grade

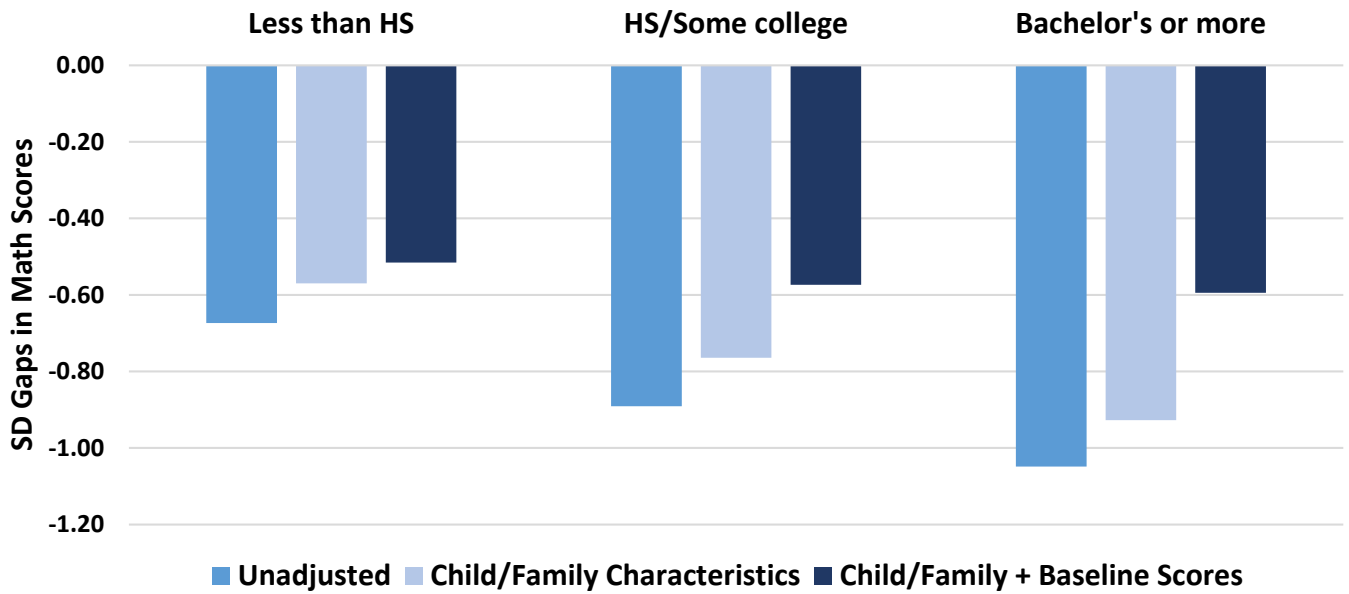


Figure 23. Adjusted Black-White math achievement gaps by parental education level in the spring of eighth grade

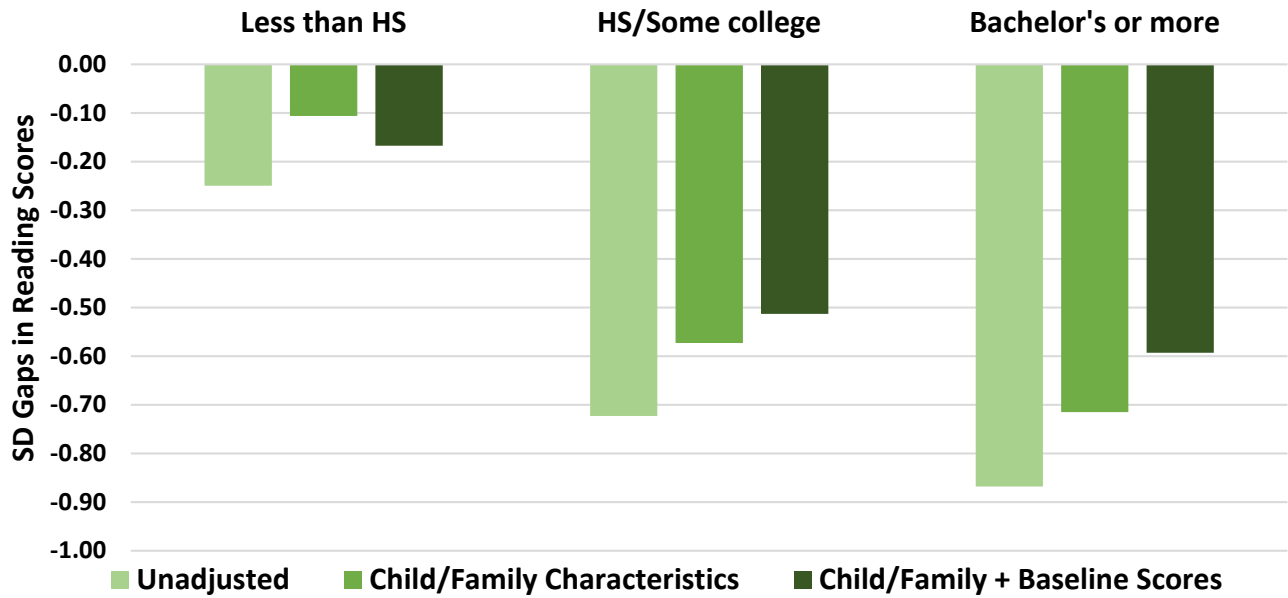


Figure 24. Adjusted Black-White reading achievement gaps by parental education level in the spring of third grade

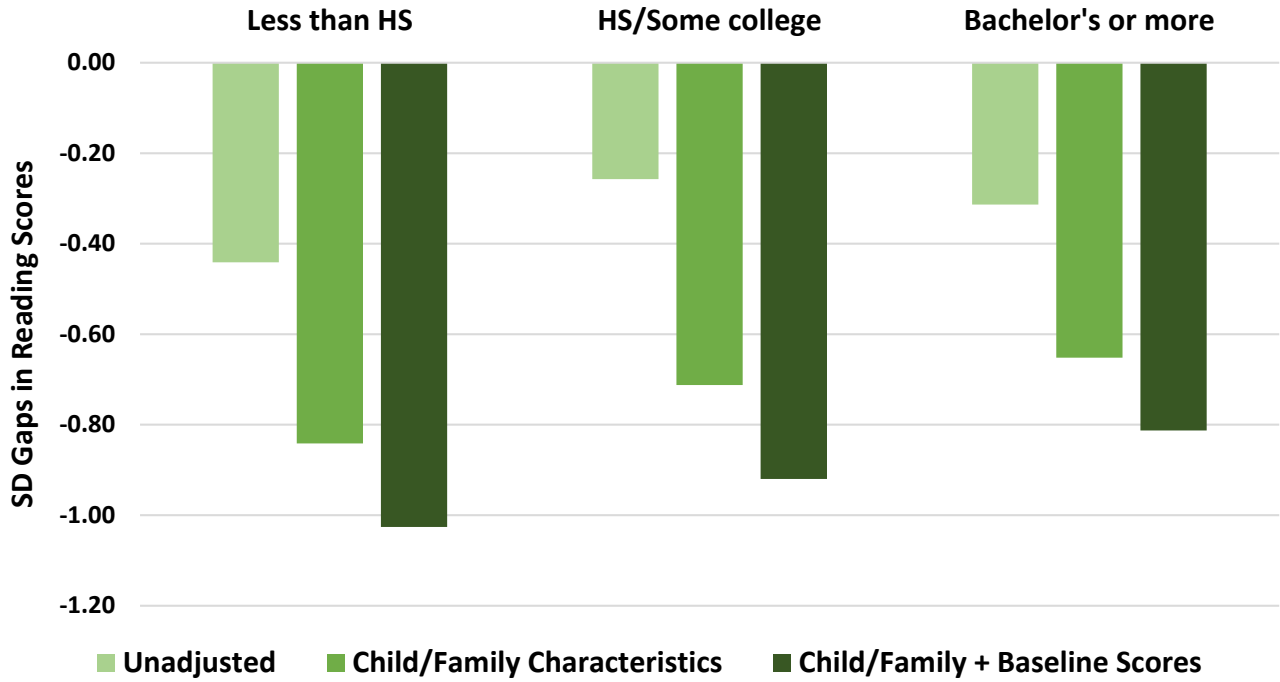


Figure 25. Adjusted Black-White reading achievement gaps by parental education level in the spring of fifth grade

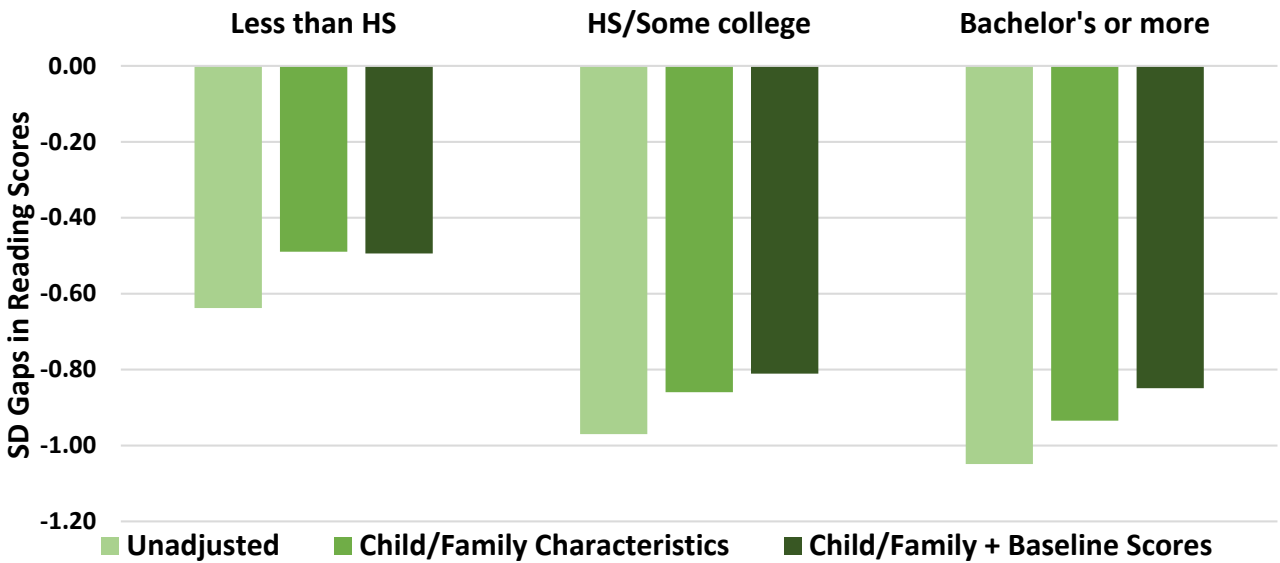


Figure 26. Adjusted Black-White reading achievement gaps by parental education level in the spring of eighth grade

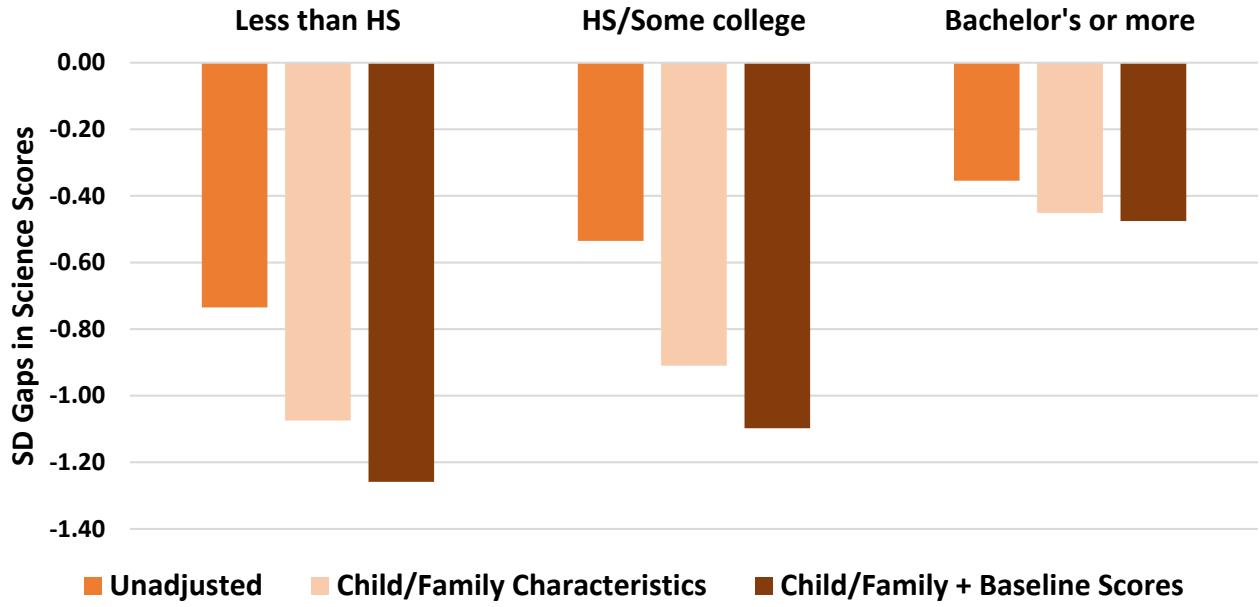


Figure 27. Adjusted Black-White science achievement gaps by parental education level in the spring of third grade

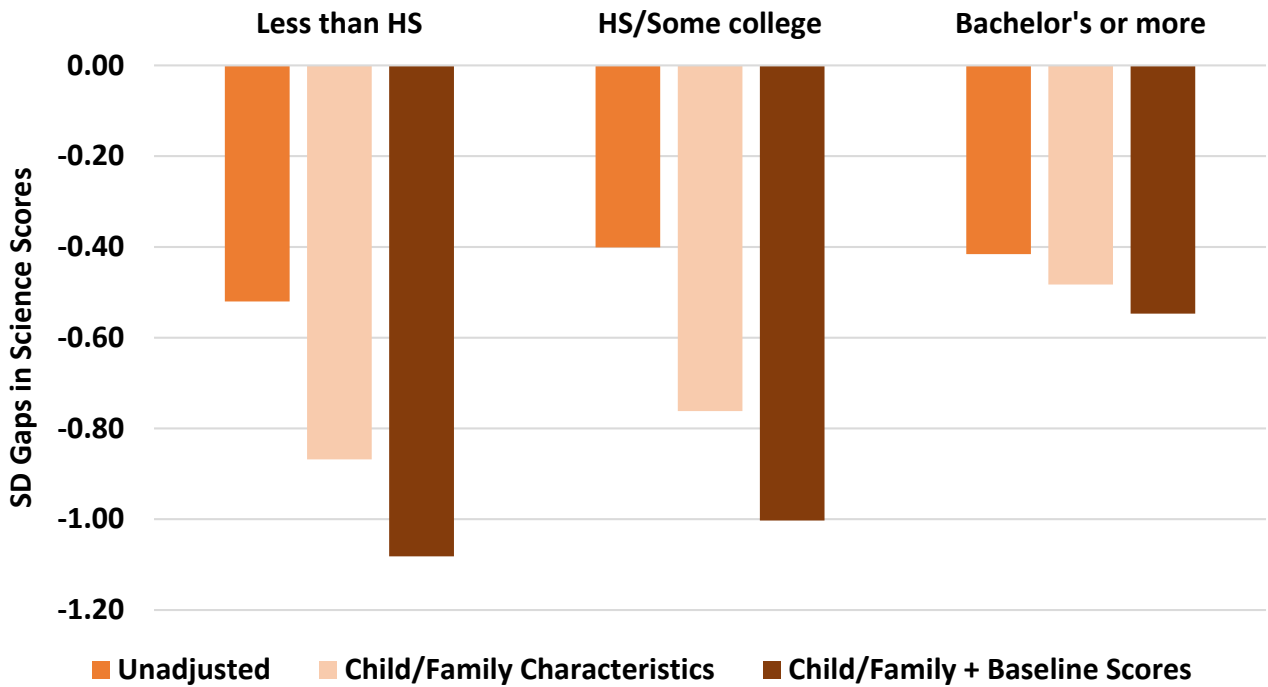


Figure 28. Adjusted Black-White science achievement gaps by parental education level in the spring of fifth grade

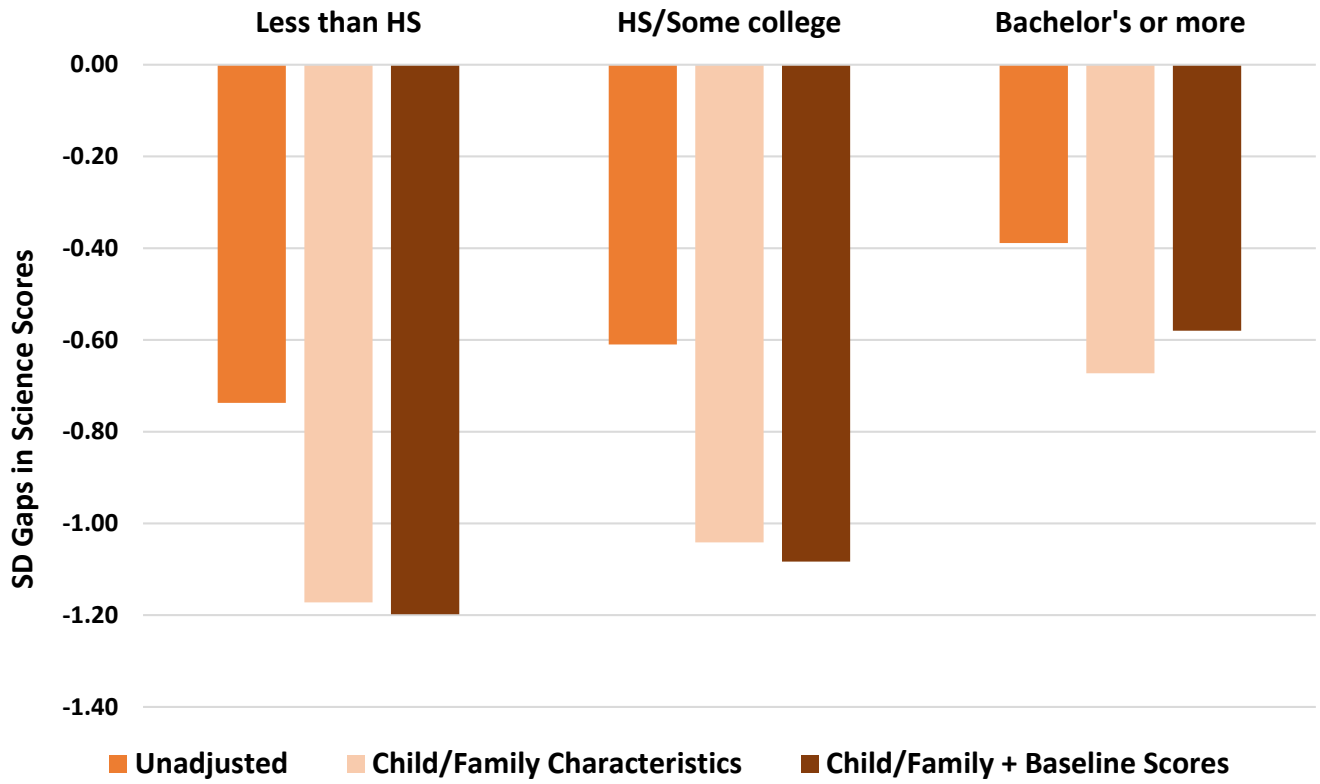


Figure 29. Adjusted Black-White science achievement gaps by parental education level in the spring of eighth grade

2.5 DISCUSSION

Consistent with the relevant scholarship, this study finds sizeable gaps in academic achievement persist between Black and White children even after accounting for family SES (Murnane et al., 2006; Reardon & Robinson, 2007). Racial skills gaps in math, reading, and science were evident at in early childhood and grew substantially, in math and science especially, across the early years of elementary school and either increased only marginally (in the cases of math and reading) or actually narrowed (in the case of science) as children transitioned from middle childhood into early adolescence. As expected, family SES was also linked with achievement, with parental education serving as a particularly robust predictor. Nevertheless, while these research supports earlier work showing the persistence of the Black-White achievement gaps across the primary school years (Fryer & Levitt, 2006; Reardon et al., 2015), its novel contribution is its delineation of how race and SES interact to shape academic skills from early childhood through early adolescence.

2.5.1 Family SES moderates Black-White achievement gaps from early childhood through early adolescence

In accord with the intersectionality framework guiding this research, this investigation of how race and SES intersect uncovered complex patterns of educational inequality. Results reveal that family SES moderates the size of racial skills gaps in early childhood, with the interactions between race and parental education level and race and household income producing divergent patterns. As

educational attainment rose, racial disparities in math, reading, and science skills increased in magnitude, with Black children lagging behind their White peers. In contrast, Black children's disadvantages in academic skills narrowed and eventually evaporated as household income increased. In fact, Black children's achievement scores outpaced those of White children at the middle and top of the income distribution. Notably, this socioeconomic moderation of race gaps persisted after controlling for child and family characteristics.

This pattern of findings persisted across middle childhood and early adolescence, with higher parental education seeming to exacerbate achievement disparities and household income appearing to narrow (or ultimately reverse) Black-White gaps. However, because the size of aggregate-level race gaps (in math and reading specifically) increased between early childhood and early adolescence, these results suggest that, relative to their performance at school entry, low- and middle-income Black students ultimately lost ground to their White peers, whereas affluent White students gained ground on their upper-income Black peers. In science, Black-White differences followed a similar pattern in both early and middle childhood: Specifically, racial disparities diminished as income increased, but only at high levels of affluence did Black children close the gap or outperform their White peers. At the same time, Black-White math, reading, and science gaps among children matched on parental education level grew in magnitude across primary school, with the largest growth occurring between kindergarten and third grade. Adjusting for differences in family background and child characteristics reduced these gaps only negligibly or not all (in some cases, adding covariates exacerbated differences) and did not substantially alter these interactive patterns. Overall, however, demographic traits explain a larger proportion of the joint effect of race and income across primary school.

These findings illustrate the importance of considering how social identities interact dynamically to shape academic development. Specifically, this research demonstrates that a failure to consider how race and SES jointly predict achievement gaps may obscure a complete portrait of the magnitude, direction, and sources of disparities. For example, while prior work (Quinn, 2015) has shown that, at school entry, Black children score higher in reading after controlling for family SES, these findings indicate that all but the poorest Black children show advantages in both reading and math, and that these advantages are related to increases in income.

2.5.2 Early academic skills play a key role in explaining why SES moderates Black-White achievement gaps in middle childhood and early adolescence

Another key contribution of this study is that it assesses whether early skills underlie later patterns of socioeconomic moderation of race disparities. Its final series of analyses revealed that controlling for baseline skills children evince at kindergarten entry helps explain why family SES moderates racial skills gaps in middle childhood and early adolescence. These results moreover indicate that baseline scores play a particularly important role in explaining the interactive effects of race and income on subsequent math, reading, and science achievement as well as the joint effect of race and parental education on later math and science scores specifically. After accounting for early childhood achievement, Black-White math gaps ceased to vary by household income in middle childhood and early adolescence, whereas income's moderation of race gaps in reading and science attenuated substantially in middle childhood and evaporated by early adolescence. Parental education's moderation of racial disparities in math and science was also largely explained by differences in early skills. However, the moderating effect of parental schooling on

Black-White reading gaps was more intractable, especially among better-educated parents, and the literacy skills children exhibited at school entry explained less of the interactive links between race and education as children aged.

In sum, these results suggest not only that family SES predicts achievement differently for Black and White children but also that race differences in early skills acquisition may represent a key pathway by which within-SES Black-White achievement gaps develop and persist. These findings square with those of Burchinal and colleagues (2011), who found that Black-White disparities in cognitive skills were evident during the preschool years and observed that controlling for these early skills eliminated achievement disparities at school entry. However, Burchinal et al. confined their analyses to a sample of low-income children; hence, their work was not informative about patterns of differences across the household income distribution nor did it investigate race disparities across levels of parental education. Still, in conjunction, these findings align with empirical scholarship and developmental theory implicating early formative experiences as key sources of later achievement disparities (Bradley et al., 1989; Farkas & Beron, 2004; Hart & Risley, 1995; Jack P Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). In particular, parenting behaviors across the first three years of life are closely linked with mean-level racial and socioeconomic disparities, and Burchinal et al. reported that Black-White differences in parenting during the preschool years partially mediated later race achievement gaps, while Farkas and Beron (2004) found that Black toddlers derived smaller benefits from cognitively-stimulating and warm parenting than White toddlers. Such findings are consistent with the contention Black-White differences in proximity to (dis)advantage may produce differential returns to SES by undermining parenting practices or blunting the effects of positive parenting. And though testing these pathways falls beyond the

scope of this paper, future scholarship should examine whether these processes underlie the development of within-SES racial skills disparities.

In light of these results, what remains unanswered is, why might household income and parental education operate differently in predicting skills for Black and White children? One hypothesis is that the processes underlying proximity to (dis)advantage play out differently across levels of income and education. Gains in household income may narrow race gaps across economic strata, while Black-White gaps widen as parental educational attainment rises because income is a stronger marker of human and cultural capital than educational attainment for Black parents. Indeed, research shows that accounting for racial differences in cognitive skills dramatically narrows wage disparities for Black men and produces a wage advantage for Black women (Carneiro et al., 2005; Fryer, 2011). By contrast, Lang and Manove (2011) found that, when matched on cognitive skills, Blacks obtain more education than comparable Whites as a signaling strategy to counteract racial bias in the labor market. Hence, equivalent levels of education may not translate into similar levels of human and cultural capital for Blacks and Whites. For this reason, among better-educated Black and White families, disparities in patterns of investment and childrearing repertoires might be the primary forces driving greater returns to parental education for White children. For example, some research has shown racial disparities in home learning environments among children with college-educated mothers, with Black children having fewer books at home and experiencing less effective parental teaching strategies (Ferguson, 2007a, 2007b; E. G. Moore, 1986).

Ethnographic research shows that Black parents' educational attainment, wealth, and neighborhood conditions as well as their involvement and investment in children's education vary markedly across income levels, with upper-income Blacks displaying considerable advantages

(Lacy, 2007). As a result, affluent Black children may benefit distinctly from resources and practices that promote their cognitive skills because their parents have reaped the benefits of superior human capital and endeavor to pass on those educational advantages (Lawrence & Mollborn, 2013; Smith, 2008). Higher household income may also afford Black families better access to high-quality child care programs, which have been shown to disproportionately benefit Black children in general and nonpoor Black children in particular (Bassok, 2010; Fuller, Bein, Bridges, Kim, & Rabe-Hesketh, 2017). Conversely, poor and low-income Black children may fall behind their White peers due to differences in exposure to extreme neighborhood disadvantage (e.g. poverty concentration, violent crime, and social disorder) (Sampson et al., 2008). Specifically, these factors may be a central stressor affecting Black children's development as they mature and interact with their communities more directly. As such, higher income may afford Black families the ability to buy themselves into more advantaged communities with a wider array of salubrious resources.

A final possible explanation for differences in the educational returns to income and education is that systematic disparities exist in the educational quality and experiences of Black parents because they are more likely to have grown up in disadvantaged families and communities, which might translate into cumulative disadvantages in school quality across their educational careers (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Massey & Denton, 1993; Pattillo-McCoy, 1999). In turn, these systemic differences may undermine the ability of Blacks to derive the same human, cultural, and social capital returns to educational attainment as their White peers (Carneiro et al., 2005). But more research into this issue is warranted.

2.6 LIMITATIONS & CONCLUSION

It's important to note the limitations of this research. First, although it uses longitudinal data and include of an extensive set of covariates, these results are ultimately descriptive and cannot be interpreted as causal. Second, the ECLS-K data, while offering comprehensive information on multiple stages of children's development, represent an older cohort of families and children, and replication analyses using more recent data will be necessary. Finally, while this research lays the foundation for future work, we have not explicitly tested the proposed processes that give rise to the patterns of associations revealed in this study.

Despite these limitations, this research examines an important and understudied issue in developmental research. Lack of attention to how Black-White skills gaps vary at different points in the socioeconomic distribution can hinder understanding of these disparities' underlying mechanisms, which may also differ by SES. Hence, a prerequisite to isolating the distinct role family, school, and community factors play in producing skills gaps is examining how the interactive relationship between race, SES, and achievement unfolds across development. This work provides compelling evidence that the educational returns to SES differ by race and illustrates the need for future research to consider in a nuanced fashion how race and SES jointly shape children's developmental contexts and academic trajectories.

3.0 EXPLORING HOW PROXIMITY TO (DIS)ADVANTAGE SHAPES SES-MATCHED BLACK & WHITE CHILDREN'S EARLY FAMILY CONTEXTS

Most empirical work investigating the overall Black-White skills gap and the limited literature examining the interactive associations between race, SES and achievement employ survey-based quantitative designs. However, to analyze the intricate ways that race intersects SES to produce achievement gaps, investigators must incorporate insights from qualitative and mixed-methods research. Quantitative methods possess several strengths, including the ability to determine the direction and magnitude of the relation between a predictor and developmental outcome; qualitative methods, however, are particularly well-suited to identifying the mechanism(s) underlying a proposed developmental pathway (Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil, & Way, 2008). Study 2 helps identify the factors and mechanisms that foment within-SES Black-White gaps and informs theoretical perspectives on the origin of racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps.

3.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Improved understanding of the factors and processes underlying the emergence of racial and socioeconomic achievement disparities in early childhood is essential: At least 50% of the overall racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps evident at the conclusion of 12th grade are attributable to skills disparities that exist at school entry (Phillips, Crouse, & Ralph, 1998; Reardon &

Robinson, 2007). Therefore, research must consider how differences in early formative experiences help foment disparities in academic school readiness.

Importantly, evidence from developmental psychology and neuroscience underscores that the first five years of life is a sensitive period during which dynamic interactions with the environment shape brain architecture and biochemistry (Fox & Rutter, 2010; Knudsen, Heckman, Cameron, & Shonkoff, 2006). During infancy and the preschool years, synaptogenesis (i.e., the formation of neural connections or synapses) occurs at a highly-accelerated pace. Experience-dependent synaptic reduction (or pruning)—which is driven by environmental inputs—follows fast on the heels of this phenomenal overproduction of synapses and lays the foundation for much of the learning that occurs in early childhood. This research underscores the pivotal role that early childhood family environments play in brain and cognitive development (Knudsen et al., 2006). Because parents guide children’s socialization, structure their environments, and dictate the quality and quantity of their early learning experiences, any investigation of the racial test-score gap must identify the factors and attendant processes that shape early family contexts. However, we know little about how family life in early childhood differs for SES-matched Black and White families.

3.2 RESEARCH AIMS

Study 2 employs qualitative and quantitative data to (1) explore disparities in SES-matched Black and White families’ proximity to multiple forms of (dis)advantage—intergenerational (i.e., family background), spatial (i.e., neighborhood), and relational (i.e., kin and peer networks)—in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region, and (2) examine within-SES racial differences in young children’s

family contexts that may be attributable to disparities in proximity to (dis)advantage and access to multiple forms of capital. Study 2 investigates the following theoretical hypothesis: (1) At each SES level, Black families (when compared to their White peers) will experience greater proximity to intergenerational, spatial, and relational (dis)advantage and diminished access to social capital, cultural capital, and wealth.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS

3.3.1 Participants

Purposive, snowball sampling was used to recruit a stratified sample ($N = 56$) of low-income ($n = 20$), middle-income ($n = 22$), and upper-income ($n = 14$) Black and White families in the Pittsburgh, PA metropolitan region. To participate, all families had to 1) have at least one biologically-related preschool-aged child (ages 3-5), and 2) be native-born U.S. citizens. Descriptive statistics for study 2's sample are presented in Table 7.

To recruit participants, a range of resources were used to (1) examine the spatial distribution of low-income, middle-income, and high-income Black and White families across the Pittsburgh metropolitan region, and (2) construct a comprehensive list of the childcare, community centers, religious organizations, and other family-serving institutions in each area. These results were used to determine which neighborhoods and organizations to target to recruit a sample of income-stratified Black and White families. Thereafter, a team of trained research assistants and I sought assistance from organizational gatekeepers to help identify and recruit families. In

qualitative research, gatekeepers facilitate the researcher's efforts to gain access to and develop trust with prospective participants (Hatch, 2002). We contacted and spoke with directors of local early childhood education and care centers and community centers, clergy or administrators at community churches and other places of worship, and other personnel at institutions serving children and families. During these interactions, we explained the purpose of the study, asked them to share recruitment materials with their clients, customers, and parishioners, and solicited their support for the study.

3.4 PROCEDURES

3.4.1 Semi-structured, in-depth interviews

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were completed with at least one parent from 56 families. Interview durations ranged from 31 minutes to nearly two-and-a-half hours. The average interview length across the entire sample was just over one hour. Each interview was digitally recorded by the researcher. The interview protocol (see Appendix A) explored multiple facets of proximity to (dis)advantage, access to a range of resources and stressors, and childrearing attitudes and behaviors; it included questions about family life and routines, parenting practices and beliefs, parents' family backgrounds and upbringing, current neighborhood characteristics and quality, and parental occupational status and working environment. After the interviews, parents completed a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix B) that collected information about their educational

attainment, household income, employment status, marital status, residential location, and wealth/assets. All interviews (except one) were conducted by the lead researcher. The remaining interview was conducted by the lead researcher's academic advisor. Participants were asked to select where they preferred to meet the researcher for an interview. The majority of interviews were completed in participants' homes, with the remaining interviews conducted at local venues in the community (e.g., public library, coffee shop) or in a conference room in the Department of Psychology. Each interview was professionally transcribed by an external vendor and then reviewed and edited by undergraduate- and graduate-level research assistants.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Before data analysis began as well as after analysis commenced, the lead researcher met weekly with a team of undergraduate and graduate-level research assistants. The lead researcher developed a preliminary codebook based on the major categories covered in the interview protocol along with existing theory. Each week the research team met to review transcripts, discuss the qualitative codes, and address any questions about what different categories and themes represented. The study's codebook (see Appendix C) went through multiple iterations and was uploaded into NVivo (a qualitative analysis software program); each coder received hands-on training in how to employ coding techniques and use NVivo software; and all preliminary coding exercises underwent reliability testing until adequate cross-coder reliability was achieved. Kappa coefficients across major categories ranged from 0.80 to 0.84.

To analyze the interview transcripts, we employed an iterative three-cycle coding process. This coding process combined both inductive and deductive approaches to data analysis. These data were collected and designed to test theoretical hypotheses regarding the central role proximity to (dis)advantage would play in shaping the developmental and social contexts of SES-matched Black and White children and families, but the lead researcher also used deductive reasoning to identify and explore emergent themes less related to the broader conceptual lens guiding this project.

First-cycle coding. First, we used *Descriptive Coding* (Saldaña, 2013) to depict the quality and quantity of racial differences in family background, subjective perceptions of neighborhood quality, and composition and quality of kin and peer networks among the SES-matched Black and White families. Specifically, each coder reviewed assigned transcripts and completed line-by-line coding of those transcripts using NVivo. Descriptive coding “leads primarily to a categorized inventory, tabular account, summary, or index of the data’s contents” (Saldaña, 2013, p.89) and ultimately serves to reduce the interview data into manageable chunks for more refined coding.

Second-cycle coding. Second, *Theoretical Coding* was applied to the responses coded during the first cycle of coding and used to delineate how race and SES independently and jointly influenced proximity to (dis)advantage and, in turn, constrained or facilitated access to an array of resources (e.g., financial support) and exposure to multiple stressors (e.g., neighborhood crime), shaped parents’ perceptions and behaviors, and structured family and community contexts. Theoretical Coding is used “to address the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions” and “to explain [theoretical constructs] in terms of how they work [and] how they develop” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 224). The lead researcher and a post-baccalaureate research assistant completed all theoretical coding

independently, and, subsequently, the lead researcher reviewed the research assistant's coding to confirm that, in general, the same or similar broad themes were identified.

Third-cycle coding. Lastly, the lead researcher used *Thematic Coding* to produce a metasummary of emergent patterns and themes (Saldaña, 2013). Thematic coding supports the exploration of participants' psychology (i.e., meanings, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions). During this final coding phase, the lead researcher, after undertaking additional review of and reflection upon the coded transcripts, applied an extended, summative phrase or sentence that pinpointed the central organizing theme, concept, or notion animating a response and/or series of responses.

Table 7. Sample characteristics for study 2

	Low-Income				Middle-Income				Upper-Income			
	Black		White		Black		White		Black		White	
	Mean or % N=10	SD	Mean or % N=10	SD	Mean or % N=9	SD	Mean or % N=13	SD	Mean or % N=6	SD	Mean or % N=8	SD
Average Household Income	18570.15*	\$11,244.99	32750.25*	\$17,337.05	\$79,111.17	\$29,319.17	\$83,200.10	\$23,875.28	\$185,000.20	\$68,337.21	\$153,833.40	\$31,846.05
Parental Education - Parent Respondent												
High school diploma or GED	3 (30.00%)		1(10.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Vocational or Technical Program	0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Some college but no degree	3 (30.00%)		4(40.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Associate's Degree	4(40.00%)		1(10.00%)		1 (11.11%)		1 (6.67%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Bachelor's Degree	0 (0.00%)		2(20.00%)		3 (33.33%)		2 (13.33%)		1 (16.67%)		2 (33.33%)	
Graduate Degree or higher	0 (0.00%)		2(20.00%)		5 (55.56%)		12 (80.00%)		5 (83.33%)		4 (66.67%)	
Parental Education - Spouse												
Not applicable	4 (40.00%)		0 (0.00%)		3 (33.33%)		1 (6.70%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
High school diploma or GED	4 (40.00%)		4 (40.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Vocational or Technical Program	0 (0.00%)		2 (20.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Some college but no degree	1 (10.00%)		0 (0.00%)		2 (22.22%)		0 (0.00%)		1 (16.70%)		1 (16.67%)	
Associate's Degree	1 (10.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		1 (6.70%)		1 (16.70%)		0 (0.00%)	
Bachelor's Degree	0 (0.00%)		3 (30.00%)		1 (11.11%)		6 (40.00%)		2 (33.33%)		2 (33.33%)	
Graduate Degree or higher	0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		3 (33.33%)		7(46.70%)		2 (33.33%)		3 (50.00%)	
Parental Education - Non-resident Spouse												
Not applicable	2 (33.33%)		10 (100.00%)		5 (62.50%)		14 (93.30%)		6 (100.00%)		6 (100.00%)	
High school diploma or GED	2 (33.33%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Vocational or Technical Program	0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		2 (25.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Some college but no degree	1 (16.67%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Associate's Degree	1 (16.67%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Bachelor's Degree	0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		1 (6.70%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Graduate Degree or higher	0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		1 (12.50%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Marital Status												
Married	0 (0.00%)**		9 (90.00%)**		3 (33.30%)**		14 (93.30%)**		4 (80.00%)		6 (100.00%)	
Cohabiting or Living with a partner	1 (10.00%)		1 (10.00%)		3 (33.30%)*		0 (0.00%)*		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Dating or In a romantic relationship	2 (20.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Single and never married	5 (50.00%)**		0 (0.00%)**		2 (22.22%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Single and divorced	1 (10.00%)		0 (0.00%)		1 (11.11%)		1 (6.67%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Single and widowed	1 (10.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		0 (0.00%)		1 (20.00%)		0 (0.00%)	
Number of Adults in Household	1.3*	0.48	2.2*	0.63	1.67	0.50	2.00	0.38	1.83	0.41	2.00	0.00
Number of Children in Household	1.70	1.06	3.20	3.19	2.11	1.17	1.73	0.46	2.00	1.26	1.67	0.82
Employment Status												
Employed	8 (80.00%)		6 (60.00%)		9 (100.0%)		13 (86.87%)		5 (100.00%)		5 (83.3%)	
Unemployed	2 (20.00%)		4 (40.00%)		0 (0.00%)		2 (13.33%)		0 (0.00%)		1 (16.7%)	
Numbers of Hours Worked Per Week	28.95	20.36	13.60	21.08	42.00**	6.78	17.76	20.86**	36.83	23.68	32.67	21.52
Parent Owns Home	1 (10.00%)*		5 (50.00%)*		4(44.44%)		12 (80.00%)		6(100.00%)		6 (100.00%)	
Average Home Equity Value	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20,833.39	\$39,250.86	\$29,611.22	\$48,213.04	\$47,893.04	\$76,312.10	\$198,917.10	\$158,025.20	\$54,000.17	\$27,829.76
Parent Owns Vehicle	5 (50.00%)*		9 (90.0%)*		8 (100.00%)		15 (100.00%)		6 (100.00%)		6 (100.00%)	
Wealth												
Checking or Savings Account	4 (40.00%)*		9 (90.00%)*		8 (88.89%)		15 (100.00%)		6 (100.00%)		6 (100.00%)	
Checking or Savings Account Value	\$149.10	\$242.16	\$16,225.25	\$31,585.22	\$27,167.06	\$37,581.21	\$42,899.30	\$40,112.87	\$83,542.50	\$34,554.65	\$77,084.08	\$26,712.46
Own Investment Account	1 (10.00%)		2 (20.00%)		3 (33.33%)**		14 (93.33%)**		6 (100.00%)		5 (83.30%)	
Investment Account Value	\$150.05	\$474.50	\$6,700.10	\$19,657.21	\$15,444.67	\$34,025.54	\$32,032.57	\$37,313.15	\$69,042.42	\$48,143.52	\$39,292.25	\$47,623.97
Adjusted Wealth Value	\$399.20	\$615.49	\$6,750.10	\$19,592.16	\$19,860.44	\$36,119.00	\$31,017.10	\$31,300.07	\$82,292.50	\$37,586.89	\$56,417.25	\$49,618.45
Total Wealth	\$399.20	\$615.49	\$25,749.25	\$39,338.61	\$49,471.67	\$82,366.47	\$75,883.33	\$96,853.86	\$281,209.60*	\$123,849.40	\$113,167.60*	\$74,154.21

Note. Adjusted wealth value = assets minus debts. Total Wealth = adjusted wealth value and home equity value. *p<.05, **p<.01

3.6 RESULTS

3.6.1 Proximity to relational (dis)advantage: Black-White differences in financial support received from relatives among low-, middle-, and high-income families

All parents in the sample reported that they could turn to family members, most frequently their parents, for occasional financial help. However, substantial race differences emerged across SES. In particular, White parents reported having more extensive family networks to tap into for economic support as well as more consistent assistance with “big ticket” purchases, such as postsecondary education, weddings, homes, and vehicles. As such, financial support often accompanied major life milestones and transitions. In contrast, Black parents across SES received financial support for substantial purchases less frequently. Their parents or extended family members tended to provide small monetary outlays in times of need, gifts for their children, and modest loans.

That said, there were some nuanced black-white differences among middle-income and upper-income parents when it came to how comfortable parents felt with receiving financial support. White middle-income and affluent parents received considerable assistance with major purchases (e.g., education). Yet, middle-income and affluent Black parents not only appeared less likely to receive these substantive forms of assistance, but also seemed to be less able to rely (consistently) on the modest forms of support that low-income Black parents received that helped them meet basic needs. Additionally, among middle- and high-income White parents, there was

appreciation but also no expressions of anxiety about receiving help. Black parents seemed to feel less entitled to and expressed greater inner conflict toward receiving economic assistance, and in some case, less confidence in their relatives' ability to provide financial support.

Big-ticket items versus basic obligations: Racial differences in family financial support

Across SES, White parents consistently received financial assistance from family members during important transitions in life, when experiencing life set-backs, and when undertaking major purchases, including outlays for education, weddings, home furnishings, small business investments, as well as costs associated with childrearing such as early childhood education and care (ECEC). Tove (Participant 0014), for example, said her mother paid for her college education. She and her husband also received considerable help from her in-laws (i.e., her husband's extended family). Tove highlighted what form this help took.

Tove (Participant 0014): There has been a lot of help, you know. When we started the business there was a lot of financial help from both sides of our family...Gary's very close to his extended family. So he has a step-grandmother, aunts and uncles, and cousins and they are very close. I am not close to my extended family at all. So anytime big events have happened in our lives...when we moved into our house his step-grandmother sent us a check...when we had our kids, monetary gifts and practical gifts. Both our families have been very generous.

This response illustrates how Tove is embedded in a network characterized by strong (family) bonds and considerable economic means. Tove and her husband have benefited from substantial economic assistance during periods of major transition in their lives.

Jessica (Participant 0016), a White mother who worked as a psychiatric nurse and was pursuing a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN), felt confident that she could rely on her father for financial support if she needed it. She explained that her father had supported her first foray into postsecondary education and helped with child care costs. This parent believed her father would also subsidize her current educational expenses associated with completing her BSN. In the

exchange reported below, Jessica discussed the types of financial support she had received and believed she could count on from her father.

Interviewer: You mentioned that your dad does well financially, that he tends to value money more than time. Has he been able to help you financially?

Jessica (Participant 0016): Oh yeah, anything I need.

Interviewer: Did he help with your education?

Jessica (Participant 0016): The first time around. He pays now, but I don't really ask him to because I don't need him to.

Interviewer: Has he helped with some things like, I know some parents have mentioned that a parent, a grandparent may have helped with a down payment on a house, or daycare tuition, or those sorts of things?

Jessica (Participant 0016): He does pay daycare if I need him to and he has offered in the past to match me but I haven't brought that up recently.

Jessica's father offered economic assistance with her education and with her daughter's child care—two major expenditures that can exert long-term effects on her financial standing and her child's future academic development. Additionally, Jessica's discussion of her father's economic aid did not betray any wariness or hesitation about accepting such help.

Intergenerational financial gifts were quite common among White families. For example, Sandra (Participant 0004) received intergenerational financial gifts from her husband's grandmother, a source of financial support that enabled them to fund their son's college savings account.

Sandra (Participant 0004): Actually, Jason's grandmother sold her house and moved in with his father. And when she did that, she gave us a portion of the sale...we could have done anything with it, she didn't specify. But, we put it into college savings for [child] and so we established college savings that way. We have told our family, that you know, instead of spending a lot of money on things in terms of gifts, that is always something they can do on holidays is contribute to that. Usually if they give us money for the kids at the holidays I will take half of it..like I have a little savings account that I just kind of, it's really just gift money. So, I put half in there and half towards college, and I figure that little savings account is...if they...when they are old enough, want a bicycle, or, you know, something that's just a little too expensive to justify, I can pull from there.

Such gifts represent an important source of intergenerational wealth transmission for White families. For some middle-income White parents, family financial support took the form of gifts as well as no-interest loans. For example, Rosalind (Participant 0025) explained not only how she and her husband were gifted money for a home down payment but also how she'd received loans to finance a car purchase and payoff student loans.

Rosalind (Participant 0025): ...we needed a couple of thousand dollars for a down payment on the house. So we got that from them, and it's same with my husband's parents. We just bought a car and I needed a couple of thousand dollars to make that happen. And that is a loan and I will pay them back in the spring. And my husband lost his job a couple years ago, and so my mom, what she did was she paid off the rest of my student loan. And then I'll just pay her back. So it's a lot easier to deal with telling her that I can't make the payment this month than telling the loan company. So yeah they've helped us a lot and I know that I can always count on them and my husband's parents to help because they're baby boomers, and they've got way more money than we do.

Rosalind's parents and in-laws helped her and her family deal with what could amount to a serious, emergency-level shortfall for other families. For example, an inability to procure funds to repair a car threatens parents' ability to travel to work, complicates routine family excursions, like grocery shopping, and may limit access to more distant resources and amenities. Likewise, being able to pay her mother back for a loan reduced the psychological stress associated with dealing with a large financial institution and also saved her from the additional costs of accruing interest. Other respondents similarly benefited from considerable economic assistance. For example, Janet (Participant 0017) recounted how her brother-in-law bought her family's car and paid her husband for a week of work when he was out of the office due to illness because her brother-in-law owned the company which employed her husband.

Black parents also turned to family in times of need; however, the support levels they could rely on were more modest than that of their White counterparts. Economic support received by Black parents typically covered basic necessities, including transportation, food, utilities, and

children's clothing, child care, and toys. As illustrated in the following excerpt, Alicia (Participant 0013)'s experiences exemplify this pattern.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you think of a time when you may have turned to your parents for help?

Alicia (Participant 0013): Oh yeah. I remember, well, at least there was one time, when I got paid but after everything was paid for, I didn't have money to get my bus pass so I was able to get it off my parents. Or I didn't have money to get my phone bill paid for. So I was able to turn to them.

After many years spent working as a nursing assistant, Imani's (Participant 0021) mother had become disabled due to a chronic back problem and therefore lived on a fixed income. As a result, she could only offer Imani limited forms of economic assistance.

Interviewer: Right, right. So it sounds like—I usually ask, “Have your parents been able to help you in getting your adulthood?” Has she – I know she's helping with babysitting – has she been able to help or has she helped with more practical things? Or is it more you're helping her? Kind of a back and forth?

Imani (Participant 0021): Some things, like I had to get some work done on the car and I needed a few dollars. I mean, she can't work anymore unfortunately because of her back, so when she get her check she let me borrow some money or she'll give me a couple of dollars. Stuff like that. But that's pretty much all she can really do.

For Black parents, financial support was typically provided in response to a specific instance of serious, but limited, need rather than as part of a pattern of continuous gifts or for sizeable expenses related to major milestones or financial shortfalls, as was the case among their White counterparts. Tanita (Participant 0003), a low-income Black mom raising a son on her own, described being able to turn to her adoptive godmother (an informal appellation) in times of need. In the excerpt below, she discussed how she could turn to her godmother when she experienced a monetary shortfall.

Tanita (Participant 0003): So, there were times I would call her and 'I need thirty dollars until I...' you know and there has never been a hesitation. She would Western Union me money in an hour. When I go home to visit, she is good for going to take my car while I am sleeping or something and when I go in my car the next morning my tank is full. I might have 'here is toll money' like in my sun visor.

Another African-American mom, middle-income Renee (Participant 0031), believed she could rely on her extended family and a few close friends for small loans and modest financial gifts, but she expressed doubt that she could turn to them for more substantial economic support.

Interviewer: So I'm wondering for what types of help or support can you rely on your family. So I guess I'm thinking about if something is wrong with the car and you needed a short-term loan.

Renee (Participant 0031): I like to think a short-term loan; I don't think that is something I could rely on in the family, no. I mean maybe gas money, like 20 bucks, certainly not 200 bucks to get the car fixed, unfortunately, so generally when those things happen I want me to figure it out. Usually it's robbing Peter to pay the car to make it all work... Yeah, I can ask some good friends, you know, that I can definitely rely on for babysitting, and even for you know, if they have it, a short term loan for car repairs."

At first, Renee said she'd like to think she could turn to family for a short-term loan; but ultimately, she decided it was unlikely. Unlike her low- and middle-income White peers she could not count on small or large outlays to buffer her against the vagaries of an economic emergency.

Additionally, Black parents were less able than their White peers to rely on consistent financial support from their parents, who often had limited financial means due to disability and retirement. Middle-income Black parents were more likely to report turning to other members of their extended families, including siblings, aunts, and uncles for economic assistance. Moreover, while these parents often expressed faith in their ability to count on family for financial help if they required it, as a group, they offered fewer concrete examples of having received financial support from parents and other family members.

Entitlement versus unease: Racial differences in type of and expectations for family financial support

Among middle- and high-income families, an additional difference emerged related to parents' levels of comfort with receiving economic aid. In particular, Black parents expressed a sense of trepidation or even guilt about turning to family, particularly their parents, for financial assistance. Black middle- and upper-income parents conveyed feeling an intense responsibility to

be financially independent, given their professional success. The middle- and high-income White parents expressed great appreciation for, but no real discomfort with or wariness toward, the financial help they received. In some respects, they seemed to feel a sense of entitlement to such support from parents in particular.

Aisha (Participant 0002), a middle-income Black mom in the sample, explained that her mother was a reliable source of financial help in times of need. Similar to White middle-income respondents, she had received parental assistance with paying her educational loans. However, unlike her White middle-income peers, she felt uncomfortable seeking help from her father, with whom she did not share as close of a relationship as she did with her mother.

Aisha (Participant 0002): My mother has been really helpful for me and helping filling some of my gaps. She actually feels really bad that I have to pay all these student loans, so she's given me money to pay for one of them, my smaller loan. Which has been really helpful especially since you know my 401K money dried up. So right when I was like, right at the end where I'm like, 'Oh \$50 left! What am I going to do with my life right now? What's happening?' She'll come in with an assist to help me extend a little bit longer. I think the point is it's not going to last. So I have to think, what's my long term plan for being financially stable right now? I have to figure, aside from getting a higher-paying job at this point, but that's still not settled.

My father I could but all throughout my life he's "I'll see what can do" and he's kind of you know, he's not, I don't want to say he's not generous. I can't say that he's not generous with his funds. But it's just hard to get money out of him. And so, and I don't like asking people for money anyway so I don't ask him often. I only ask him if I really, really, really and usually it's my mother who says, well call your father. And I'll say, "I don't want to." But if I'm really desperate, then I will.

A similar discomfort with financial support was expressed by Brenda (Participant 0048), a Black high-income marketing executive, whose mother paid for her entire college education—a major outlay. She reported, "My mother paid for my four years of college so that I wouldn't have any debt coming out." Brenda's mother had also helped with other expenses, such as schooling fees, discretionary spending money, and the cost of a wedding dress, but she expressed ambivalence and guilt about her mother's largesse.

Brenda (Participant 0048): They paid for my wedding. My mom bought my wedding dress, and I was kicking and screaming. I didn't go crazy, but there was a dress I wanted, and a dress I would be okay with. And she wanted me to get that one. I'm like, "It's one time." She's the most generous person I know, generous almost to a fault. She's so selfless and I do try to be like her, and I try not to, in my adult life, take advantage of it. In college, I took advantage of it. I was like, "I need books!" and they were just sending me money. I think I had more money than anyone on campus. And now that I'm older and a parent, I feel so bad. I couldn't even tell her about it. It hurts me to know that I took advantage because she's just beautiful. So I try to do what I can to show her I love her. But she's that type of person that if you're cold, she's giving you her sweater.

Equivalent discomfort was not expressed by middle- and upper-income White parents.

While most expressed appreciation for the support they had received over the years, there was no guilt or discomfort associated with the receipt of financial assistance. For Karina (Participant 0007), a White high-income mom in the sample, there had never been any doubt that she was expected to attend college nor that she could expect help paying for her education. Due to her parents' financial support for her schooling, she was unburdened by student loans, which she viewed as a tremendous advantage.

Karina (Participant 0007): And they paid for my entire undergraduate education and always had made that clear. They were both the first in their families to go to college. And in my mom's case, did so with no financial support or emotional support. You know, "Women don't go to college while you are doing that." It's her, even more than my dad, had made it clear. "Even at 18, if you don't know what you want to do, you're going to college for 4 years and you're going to figure it out, we will support you. We will pay for it. You don't need to worry about that." That was a message that was really pretty clear throughout most of my childhood, even though it was abstract as a child. Something that I am eternally grateful for now, just to start our life together without student debt is a whole different type of opportunity.

According to Karina, her parents also paid for her first semester of graduate school, even though she expected to do so herself. That economic assistance combined with tuition benefits derived from her employment at a university meant she completed her master's degree with few to no out-of-pocket costs to herself. This parent's mother also routinely sent gifts, including

clothing, for her son, meaning the support she'd received ran the gamut from the major to the comparatively mundane.

Karina (Participant 0007): I went on and get my master's degree at [selective private university], and I was an employee. So my tuition was paid for, with the exception of my first semester, which I felt was totally fair to pay for, and then they surprised me and had saved the money, so I didn't have to pay for it myself. That would be the other biggest thing that jumps to mind in terms of that type of help. My mom also loves, now that we have a child, loves doing shopping for him, which in the long run, is a huge burden. I mean, she's the one that's not only paying for but thinking, 'oh, what size will he be in the winter, what kind of boots does he need.' It's really been great. She gets—it's an unusually beneficial thing, too, in terms of ongoing support.

Despite an abundance of financial support from family members, middle- and upper-income White parents never expressed any concern about having received the help. Instead, it seemed these parents felt a sense of entitlement to what they had received and, although they were appreciative, the receipt of support was not accompanied by feelings of guilt or inadequacy for accepting assistance and the failure to be independent.

3.6.2 Proximity to spatial (dis)advantage: Black-White differences in parents' perspectives on neighborhood quality among low-, middle-, and high-income families

Irrespective of family SES or race, safety and social cohesion were key criteria by which parents judged the quality of the neighborhoods where their families made their homes. Across race and SES, parents yearned to raise their children in safe communities with positive social environments, where they were protected from a range of neighborhood dangers by caring and watchful neighbors. Despite these shared preferences and concerns, both socioeconomic and racial

differences emerged in parents' perspectives on the safety and social cohesion of their communities.

Overall, middle- and upper-income parents expressed fewer or more circumscribed concerns about safety in their communities than their low-income peers. Yet, among low-income parents, there were major racial differences in both the sources and proximity of threats to neighborhood safety, with Black parents describing more grave and proximal concerns about neighborhood safety. As family income increased from low-income to middle-income, White parents evidenced striking reductions in threats to neighborhood safety, whereas middle-income Black parents still reported serious threats to safety. In other words, the benefits of increased family income for neighborhood safety were less pronounced for Black than for White families. These differences disappeared among high-income parents, who reported similar levels of satisfaction with and safety in their neighborhoods.

For the most, concerns about negative social environments were also more prevalent among low-income parents. Yet, substantive Black-White differences emerged in parents' views on and assessments of neighborhood quality. Similar to the findings for safety, while middle-income White participants discussed their neighborhoods in glowing terms, African-American parents' appraisals were less universally positive and characterized by heightened concerns about their neighborhoods' social environments. Among affluent families, however, both Black and White parents once again shared similarly positive perspectives on their communities' social environments.

Parents' conceptions of neighborhood quality: Shared notions of safety and social cohesion

Across this socioeconomically and racially diverse sample, parents expressed a universal preference for living in safe communities that provide opportunities for children to venture outside

without worrying about their health or safety. In particular, parents wanted opportunities for children to safely play and explore with peers in their immediate surroundings. Interwoven into parents' narratives about the quality of their neighborhoods and their conceptions about what constituted safety were parents' perspectives on and preferences regarding social relationships in their neighborhoods. In general, parents expressed preferences for neighborhoods that were "family-oriented" and in which neighbors "look out for" each other's children, which in turn, inspired greater confidence that children could safely engage in (age-appropriate) free play outdoors and develop friendships with other children.

For example, when asked whether her neighborhood is a good place to raise children, Rosalind (Participant 0025), a middle-income White mom, referenced the abundance of children in her neighborhood and opportunities for children to play outside with friends.

Interviewer: So typically I like to begin by asking participants about their neighborhoods, about their communities. So, can you tell me about your current neighborhood and what you think of it as a place for raising children?

Rosalind (Participant 0025): Sure. I live in [small, integrated, middle-income neighborhood in Pittsburgh's East End], and it's perfect. I love it, and our house was very small. So we're think selling it and I would be perfectly happy if we just moved into a bigger house within the neighborhood. It's wonderful for raising kids. There's a lot of kids around and my son is not really old enough to like be running out playing in the street but I just really like that there's just always kids, running back and forth up the sidewalk and all of the neighborhood kids who are sort of old enough to be social, like they all kind of run around together and hang out together. It's really safe. And it's really quiet. Most of the streets cull de sacs. Our street is a cul-de-sac. So it's perfect. Yeah, I love it.

Similarly, for Nicole (Participant 0029) (also a middle-income White mother), safety, social cohesion, and presence of other young children were key characteristics of high-quality neighborhoods for raising children.

Interviewer: So since I often meet parents at their homes, I usually like to start with questions about your current neighborhood. So can you tell me about the current neighborhood you live in, what type of neighborhood it is, and what is it like as a place for raising a family?

Nicole (Participant 0029): We live in [highly-affluent neighborhood in the city], and I particularly like our street. We have a lot of young families on our street, and there's lots of other kids for my kids to play with. So it feels very safe, very welcoming and actually we live across the street from my son's school and very close to my daughter's preschool.

Serena (Participant 0047), a middle-income Black mom, also pointed to general safety and feeling a general sense of comfort with her child being able to traverse her community safely as its major strengths.

Serena (Participant 0047): I would say the best thing about the community is that the level of safety and hopefully it's not like a false sense of security. I mean we're still vigilant you know about what we see and stuff like that but as far as for my kids, I feel comfortable with sending them off to school. I don't feel like you know there's a lot of you know, dangerous elements or negative influences. I mean your typical goofball stuff but there's not a lot of things that you hear about in other communities.

These common notions about which characteristics denoted high-quality neighborhoods were evident in the vast majority of interviews. No systematic differences related to family income or race emerged in parents' narratives.

Dealing with danger: Racial differences in sources and proximity of threats to neighborhood safety

Threats to neighborhood safety were most pronounced for low-income parents, who reported chronic threats to public safety that undermined their comfort in their neighborhoods. Low-income parents of all racial backgrounds talked about threats to neighborhood safety as a salient factor in their everyday experiences; however, the source of the threats and the proximity of these threats differed for Black and White families. In particular, neighborhood safety threats for White families were often related to traffic speed and density, whereas Black families more often mentioned violent crime and drug activity in their communities as major concerns. For example, Janet (Participant 0017), a White parent in a low-income family, said speeding motorists were a common safety problem in her community, explaining that "you deal with a lot of speeders," and she feared having her children play "on the streets" for this reason. This mother

compared her community unfavorably to a more affluent neighboring suburban community, which she viewed as having more security/police-related resources. She also believed the police were less responsive to the concerns of residents in her community than in the adjacent affluent community.

Janet (Participant 0017): ...the other part of [affluent suburban community] has the traffic cameras, the high speed things...like they all have a police force. We have two hundred and twelve people in our borough. That's why nothing gets done until somebody grabs us, takes us under their wing I guess. Other than that even the neighboring township police departments they're nice. They don't really do much but at least you see them and you ask them. I had a dog brought to my yard and I called and asked "Can you guys come down and scan to see if it has a chip?" I mean that will take it (dog) somewhere but I have four kids. It's (dog) calm, but what if it freaks out in the car? What if one of my kids pulls its ear, and, you know. He is like, 'Just call, get it cleared through the station,' even though ...because it's not their jurisdiction. They don't have to but they drive up and down my street every day, so, guess what? We found the owner. So, other than that, if we had police jurisdiction, we would be all right too, I think.

Similar to Janet (Participant 0017), speeding motorists were a serious problem for Crystal (Participant 0039).

Interviewer: What would you change about the community if you could, if you could wave the magic wand?

Crystal (Participant 0039): If I could change anything about the community, it would be the traffic laws. Slower speed limits. Because that's huge. We live right off of the main road, so cars are flying there. I would have somebody there watching it. And I would also have the tenants monitor who they let come in our neighborhood because there's a lot of drugs. And that house two houses away from us, it's a whole bunch of young kids, and there are people in and out of the house at all hours of the night. So I think having a safer community would be great.

In contrast, low-income Black parents were more likely to report that violent crime and drugs in the community were serious threats to neighborhood safety. Many low-income Black parents—Alicia (0013), Raina (0015), Imani (0021), Talise (0026), and Shameka (0030)—viewed protection and freedom from violent crime as the key criteria for judging their neighborhoods'

quality, and lower-income Black Participants also reported having grave concerns about violent crime afflicting their communities.

Interviewer: And what's the worst thing in your neighborhood?

Shameka (Participant 0030): Drugs.

Interviewer: ...If you complain about it what is it?

Shameka (Participant 0030): Drugs and the violence...because drugs lead to violence.

In addition to differences in the sources of threats to neighborhood safety, there were also notable differences in the proximity to crime and other safety issues for Black and White low-income families. Specifically, among the few low-income White parents who conveyed concerns about drug activity or violence in their communities, they referred to problems that were more distal than did their Black peers. For example, Diana (Participant 0027) expressed concern about increasing crime in a section of her community, but indicated it was somewhat removed from her immediate neighborhood vicinity.

Diana (Participant 0027): It's starting to get a little bit sketchy not so much on this side of town but on the other side of town... There has been a lot more shootings and things like that going on and drug related things. I am not sure if it is coming from other communities or if it is just moving in here because the other communities are kind of being cleaned out per se. So, I am not sure.

Unlike their White peers, whose fears were more oblique or abstract, Black parents had more direct experience with crime and other safety issues. They had greater proximity to these threats to neighborhood safety, and these threats sometimes had profound implications for families. Compellingly, Alicia (Participant 0013), a Black low-income mom in the sample, had dire concerns about her neighborhood's safety due to its problems with violent crime, and she hoped to relocate to a "better neighborhood."

Interviewer: So, you mentioned that you and [child] live on the [neighborhood] right now. So, can you tell me where you live and what your neighborhood is like?

Alicia (Participant 0013): [Parent sighs and harrumphs] We live in the [high poverty neighborhood in the city] and that neighborhood is pretty rough. So I'm trying to move out

of there. There's people, you know, they shoot people. We've had people get stabbed up there, so really I don't like raising her in this neighborhood, so I definitely am looking for a better neighborhood to raise her in.

Perhaps the most salient example of how proximal these threats to neighborhood safety were to low-income Black families in the sample came from Raina (Participant 0015), who did not hesitate to share her displeasure when asked about her neighborhood. Sitting outside her apartment complex on its steps, she was a victim of a violent crime.

Interviewer: I wanted to ask about your neighborhood. Can you tell me about your neighborhood now?

Raina (Participant 0015): I hate it. I'm ready to move. I'm looking. It's too small. Now my daughter's older so I'm ready to move. I got shot outside. It was crazy. It happened like 3 months ago. Just sitting out where I was and they came up the steps, we were sitting right there, and someone just started shooting. It was like 10:00.

Raina thus had direct, first-hand experience with violent crime. This experience seemed to have had lingering consequences for her physical well-being, her employment status, and therefore (presumably) her economic and psychological well-being.

Interviewer: Where was it that you got shot?

Raina (Participant 0015): In my leg, just like my calf. It hurts. My crutches are still right there, my brace is—I don't know. That's why I feel like I'm not working now is because it still hurts when it's cold outside, I feel it in my legs. I'm ready to move. I'm just happy my baby wasn't here. Because normally I wouldn't be sitting outside if my kid's like—so she wasn't here, so I was like, "All right, I'll sit outside," and they just started shooting.

In the wake of her experience, this mother had changed her daily routines—another lingering impact of her trauma. Specifically, she and her daughter never ventured outside, never used public transportation nearby, and only used the rear exit when going out.

Interviewer: Given what happened, has it made you more cautious about letting her go outside? How do you deal with it? How do you manage?

Raina (Participant 0015): We don't go outside. And if we do, we go out through the back. And I never catch the bus; I never walk up and down the hill. We normally get in the car and go wherever we have to go.

Not surprisingly, when asked whether she could identify any “good things about the neighborhood,” she simply replied, “No.”

Neighborhoods as an oasis or a menace: Black-White differences in perceptions of neighborhood quality and safety among middle-income parents

On the whole, middle-income parents’ narratives evinced fewer threats to neighborhood safety and were less likely (than low-income parents’ narratives) to report concerns about neighborhood quality. However, there were major racial differences in parents’ perceptions of neighborhood quality and threats to neighborhood safety. Overall, middle-income White parents viewed their communities positively, with only one parent (Sabrina, 0009) expressing any concerns about crime. For White parents, as family income level increased, there were notable improvements in perceived neighborhood quality and reductions in perceived threats to neighborhood safety. Paul (Participant 0001), a White middle-income father, said his desire to replicate for his daughter his experience of being able to venture outside without being intensely monitored spurred his family’s recent move to a new community.

Paul (Participant 0001): ...Last year we moved because we lived very much in the city and in an intersection that was extremely busy and when I grew up I could have walked to the backyard or I could [have] walked to the park that’s right behind the house then my mom could feel I was safe. And I didn’t feel that level of safety, so we recently moved to where we live on a dead end street. Within a suburban district, but where there’s all the busy stuff that you want to do if you want to get to it, but our house feels (pause) my kids can play outside without me having to watch them every single moment.

Sandra (Participant 0004), another White middle-income parent, also appreciated her neighborhood’s safety and quiet.

Interviewer: ...What do you like about this neighborhood? What do you think about it as a place for raising kids?

Sandra (Participant 0004): I like that we are in, like a section of H- P- that’s relatively safe and quiet but I also really like that we are in a city.

In contrast, middle-income Black parents reported major worries about neighborhood quality and safety. For Black parents, increases in family income level were not accompanied by corresponding improvements in perceived neighborhood quality and reductions in perceived neighborhood safety threats that were observed for White parents. Middle-income Black parents were more divided than their White peers in how favorably they viewed their neighborhoods as places for raising children. Three middle-income Black parents, Aisha (0002), Renee (0031), and Jamila (0046), expressed disquiet about crime and other markers of disadvantage in their communities. Three other middle-income Black parents, (Naomi (0044), Serena (0047), and Joseph (0049), viewed their communities as basically safe and untroubled by the grave problems afflicting other neighborhoods in the Pittsburgh metro region. For Aisha (Participant 0002), safety was key concern; in her view, high levels of illegal drug activity and its close proximity to her home were primary problems. When asked to discuss what she thinks of her community as a place for raising children, Aisha (Participant 0002) reported that she had serious worries about its increasing drug activity.

Interviewer: ...what do you think of your current community as a place to raise a family, as a place to raise kids? What are the good things? What are the challenges?

Aisha (Participant 0002): Right, I think, well right now where we live activity on the block has picked up, and not in a positive way. So it used to be a quiet block but now you know we've got some, we basically are kind of situated in between kind of two trap houses⁶, you know? So I have to be more protective of him, right? So I have to even say, you know, I try not to say his name when we're outside. And you know he can't, I have to keep him closer to me. He wasn't playing outside by himself anyway. But I just have to keep him closer to me. We're not really lingering outside as much, and I still speak to my neighbors so they, you know, know that we're here. You know but there's a whole like, you know, there's a whole safety piece of just trying to coexist while, you know, whatever activity that was happening before maybe we didn't know about was inside but now it's like outside it's just like, "Okay hold on you can't, you can't be doing this outside. Like it's just, this is too much."

⁶ A "trap house" is a house or building where illicit drugs are manufactured, distributed, and sold.

As illustrated by her refusal to even say her son's name when she ventured outside near her home, this middle-income African American mother believed she had be extra vigilant in order to protect her son and guard his well-being. Renee (Participant 0031), a mother of children spanning the age range between preschool and college, agreed that safety was a key factor in her judgments about her community's quality. For her, lack of safety was a motivating factor underlying her desire to relocate to a different neighborhood. During our conversation, Renee suggested that her neighborhood had changed for the worse in the time she'd lived there, explicitly referencing her concerns about violent crime, "It's not the safest and most peaceful environment."

Renee (Participant 0031): So I live in the Duquesne area, and it used to be, the apartment complex used to be a fairly decent place to raise children. It's changed a lot in the last few years so probably not the best place to, you know, to raise children, so I guess the goal, at some point, would be to change the living environment in terms of communities, but it used to be a really nice place so.

Violent crime and thus the perceived inability of her children to venture outside safely were major concerns for this parent.

Renee (Participant 0031): ...it's just a different environment in terms of outside you know, playing outside you know, trusting that your kids are going to be okay outside. There is some crime and violence so it's just you know really become not the best environment to you know, the safest most peaceful environment to raise children in.

Hence, despite having achieved middle-income status, many of the middle-income Black families in the sample didn't perceive their neighborhoods as ideal environments for raising children and reported a range of threats to safety.

There were few racial differences in how upper-income Black and White Participants perceived their communities, and for the most part, those differences suggested that high-income Black parents were *less* concerned about safety issues in their communities. These findings must be interpreted with caution because very few high-income parents discussed issues related to safety

as challenges or as markers of neighborhood quality in the same way as did their low- and middle-income peers.

Nonetheless, only one high-income White parent voiced any concerns about safety in her neighborhood. Most affluent White parents in this sample perceived their neighborhoods as safe and positive places for raising children. Natalie (Participant 0018) specifically discussed her street and suggested that her views on safety were tied to her perception that her children were not endangered and that she could trust her neighbors to behave appropriately.

Interviewer: ...what do you think of this neighborhood as a place for raising children?

Natalie (Participant 0018): This street, specifically, I think is very good. It's a cul-de-sac. For instance, on Halloween we just walk the street, and I feel pretty confident that I am not going to find anything crazy in my kids' candy or anything like that.

Gina (Participant 0032) was equally untroubled by fears about her neighborhood, and her perception of safety appeared related to her belief that she was safe in her home and possessions and did not have to be vigilant in protecting them. She said, "It's a very safe neighborhood, I feel. There's a lot of times I've left my door unlocked and didn't even realize it." Implicit in these parents' responses was the notion that a generalized sense of social trust underlies neighborhood safety.

High-income Black parents also expressed few worries related to safety in their communities. Brenda (Participant 0048) offered an extensive summary of the many positive aspects of her community, and only listed the "the [lack of] beauty of some of the homes in the area" as a drawback, explaining, "We have to drive through some crazy looking houses to get where we live." This mom could not identify other negative characteristics in her community.

Interviewer: So aside from the aesthetic appeal, is there anything else you would change?

Brenda (Participant 0048): I can't think of anything. I feel safe. We have the fire department and police department across the street.

Aneeka (Participant 0055) expressed more nebulous general concerns about her children being too young to play outside unsupervised, but these concerns were not related to specific fears about dangerous conditions in her neighborhood.

Aneeka (Participant 0055): And it also – we're fortunate that we have a really large yard that we're in the process of developing, so – but we'd have to fence it off in order for us to feel safe with our kids playing outside.

Interviewer: Okay.

Aneeka (Participant 0055): Like, it's not at the top of their list, but I think it all depends on what people are looking for. And also our kids are very young, so there's really nowhere in town we could live, unless we lived at the White House, or I mean in the world where we would be letting them play outside by themselves at two and six.

Interviewer: Right.

Aneeka (Participant 0055): I mean that's just not happening.

Interviewer: Right.

Aneeka (Participant 0055): So whether our thoughts will change as they get older and are more independent, that's a question. There aren't a lot of little kids that I see in our neighborhood.

This parent planned to revisit the issue of letting her children play outside once it became developmentally appropriate for them to do so. Ultimately, however, aside from her suggestion that few young children lived in her neighborhood, her community's characteristics were not closely linked to her decision-making about whether to let her children play outside unsupervised.

“Keeping an eye out” versus “keeping it moving”: Black-White differences in perspectives on and quality of neighborhood social environments among low-income families

As noted earlier, safety was only one important facet of neighborhood quality identified by parents. Many parents' responses suggested that being able to trust that neighbors will keep an eye out for each other, in general, and for each other's' children, in particular, was a defining feature of good neighborhood for raising children. Other positive features that were nearly universal among parents, regardless of SES or race, were the prevalence of young children, the friendliness of neighbors, and orderliness of the environment. Yet, among low-income Black parents, substantive differences emerged in whether parents believed their neighborhoods aligned with

their community-related ideals. More surprisingly, low-income Black and White parents offered divergent perspectives on what they expected and desired in interactions with neighbors and on which markers of quality were essential and noteworthy.

For the majority of low-income White parents (7 out of 10), several aspects of the social environment were deemed as necessary conditions for a neighborhood to be a good place for raising children: **knowing and being known by neighbors, tight-knit relationships among neighbors, neighbors looking out for one another**, and implicitly, **shared norms and values**. Additionally, several White parents also expressed a preference for neighborhoods that included **larger numbers of young children**. A plurality of these low-income White participants—Jessica (0016), Jillian (0022), Diana (0027), Sophie (0042)—also said their neighborhoods possessed at least some of the positive features. For example, when asked to describe her neighborhood, Jillian (Participant 0022), who lived in a middle-class borough southeast of Pittsburgh, said “It’s very nice and neighbors look after you, we look after the neighbors. I didn’t come from that area. It’s amazing.” This 38-year-old mom of six also viewed familiarity with her neighbors as a key positive attribute of her neighborhood.

Interviewer: What would you say is the best thing about the community and what’s the worst thing about it?

Jillian (Participant 0022): The best thing is knowing everybody. I used to sell Avon so I would go door to door. And I think the best thing is knowing who people were and their background or story, you know, knowing that- I don’t know, I just feel like that’s important to know who you’re around. And the worst thing is—I’m not really sure if there’s a worse thing in my community. I guess, even like you have—I don’t know, I don’t know honestly. No, there’s no worse thing honestly. I’m very happy.

Jessica (Participant 0016), a psychiatric nurse and mother of one, had grown up in the same small, rural community outside of Pittsburgh where she now raised her own daughter. According

to her, the fact that “everybody knows everybody” was one of the great attributes of her community. She also highlighted the strong social bonds among her community’s neighbors.

Jessica (Participant 0016): ...[M]y community is very tightknit. We do everything together. We have a small public pool, everybody goes there. We have a community day once a year; everybody goes there. We have a private fire hole; everybody goes there. Like when we trick-or-treated the other day, the corner that I live on, we all had a huge party. In the summertime, we’re all outside. Our kids are playing. We’re all hanging out. There might be 30 people at the playground. And my town is small. It’s straight up; we do it up. It’s a very tight-knit community.

Jessica believed these social connections and shared community norms benefited her daughter and motivated her to remain in this community.

Interviewer: So would you say that it was a good place to grow up in? When you were a child do you remember feeling connected to your community? Do you remember feeling a sense of connection and comfort there?

Jessica (Participant 0016): Yeah. Oh, yeah. That’s why I stay there. I want to move all the time, but it’s good for my kid.

The notion that shared norms and values both promoted social connections among neighbors and served as a key characteristic of a good community was also picked up in the responses of Diana (Participant 0027), who lived in a low-income borough in Allegheny County, but whose immediate neighborhood was populated by detached, single-family homes with well-kempt lawns. When asked what she thought the best aspects of her neighborhood were, she replied, “I would say, the immediate surrounding area right here, it’s is a pretty close-knit group. People know each other; they kind of look out for each other, which is really nice. We just are trying...we want the best for the families, for the kids, for the future.” Here, she links social bonds among neighbors with common community norms and values (i.e., “we want the best for the families, for the kids, for the future.”)

Tellingly, among those low-income White parents who said their neighborhoods lacked one or more of these qualities, parents still noted these ideals factored strongly in their appraisals

of neighborhood quality. Janet (Participant 0017) exemplified this pattern. When asked to characterize her neighborhood, she noted its dearth of social connections: “It is a very nice neighborhood, but I don't think anybody really knows too many people.” Later, she elaborated on this notion.

Interviewer: So aside from the—you mentioned the safety issue—aside from that issue, is there anything else that you would change about [your neighborhood] if you could?

Janet (Participant 0017): Elected officials. Sorry. I don't know, like everybody just seems to do whatever they want to do. Like between me and my two other neighbors, everybody else just does whatever they want. I don't know, in [former community], you knew your neighbor. Nowadays, I guess you really don't need to know your neighbor, but I don't know...Maybe have like a block party or something. I tried...I kind of did one of those over the summer. Get some neighbors together to get to know [each other].

Two ideas emerge from this mom's narrative. First, her complaint that “everybody just seems to do whatever they want to do” suggests a belief that good neighborhoods are characterized by strong social order and informally-enforced social controls on behavior. Later in this excerpt, she highlighted the other attributes which feature prominently in high-quality neighborhoods. More precisely, she compared her current community unfavorably with her former community, which she indicated was a place where neighbors knew and socialized with each other and where residents shared an esprit de corps.

Lastly, low-income White respondents also viewed neighborhoods with a greater proportion of young families with children more favorably. For example, Jillian (Participant 0022) wished there were more children in her neighborhood and saw a dearth of young children as one of its few drawbacks.

In general, low-income Black parents reported weaker social connections and less social trust (both markers of social cohesion) among residents in their neighborhoods. That is, more African-American parents were apprehensive about letting their children venture outside because

neighbors did not look out for one another. More strikingly, low-income African-American respondents tended to cite different attributes as being indicative of high-quality neighborhoods than did their White peers. Specifically, several African-American parents—(Tanita (0003), Kiara (0005), Aniyah (0023), Taylor (0024), Talise (0026), and Shameka (0030)—indicated that a **quiet** community was a quality community. Based on their narratives, this emphasis on quiet enjoyment may reflect the inverse of community chaos, and, in particular, markers of disorder and danger. In addition, in contrast to their low-income White peers, two Black parents, Tanita (0003) and Kiara (0005), suggested that having **neighbors who keep to themselves** was a positive feature of their communities, and two others, Alicia (0013) and Aniyah (0023), said they chose to keep to themselves. Finally, there was some degree of cross-race agreement with the contention that the **presence of young children** was a key feature of a good neighborhood for raising children.

Tanita (Participant 0003), who resided with her son in a middle-income, low-poverty suburb south of Pittsburgh, hit upon several common themes in the narratives of low-income Black parents. First, she compared her neighborhood favorably to prior areas where she had lived and described her current community as “more family oriented,” its residents as “more friendly” and more likely to “keep to themselves.” Along with differences in community norms, this mom also highlighted differences in crime and police presence.

Tanita (Participant 0003): There is not a lot of drama based...usually where I come from police come to peoples' houses for domestic violence...that stuff is normal... You don't see that here, it is usually quiet...lights out maybe 7:00, 7:30 or 8:00. You see a bunch of cars, but hardly any lights are on. In the morning time, you see a lot of kids and parents at the bus stops or getting in the car. Like you see a small community. You don't hear people riding down the street like with loud music or gang bangers or all that kind of stuff. So, if was definitely something I had to get used to in a good way. Like, I don't have to hide my purse before I get out of the car because I am scared that something is going to happen. So, it is definitely a positive change. It makes parenting easier.

In this excerpt, Tanita juxtaposed signs of disorder and danger (i.e., “drama,” “police com[ing] to peoples’ houses for domestic violence”) against markers of social order and cohesion (i.e., “In the morning time, you see a lot of kids and parents at the bus stops or getting in the car. Like you see a small community.”) Notably, her response indicated that her levels of psychological vigilance against potential dangerous declined in response to the *new normal* she observed in her neighborhood.

Other low-income African-American parents reported that lower levels of neighborhood social cohesion influenced their parenting decisions. For instance, Kiara (Participant 0005), a 31-year-old working mother of three, who lived in a subsidized housing complex, offered this assessment of her neighborhood.

Interviewer: What do you think of it as a place for raising kids, and you can compare and contrast it with, you know, the community where you grew up?

Kiara (Participant 0005): ...I don't let my kids go out and play, just because I don't feel comfortable because of how people don't look out for...If I am trying to do something around the house, just to let them go out and play—like I used to be able to do—I can't do that. I don't feel comfortable so... I will take them to the park rather than let them out in the community to play, unfortunately. Like I said, I don't feel comfortable with having kids and, you know, nobody would look out for them. I really just don't let them go out and just play freely like how I used to be able to play freely. So, there is a lot more to worry about nowadays.

However, Kiara didn't present a primarily negative assessment of her neighborhood. She noted several positive attributes as well.

Interviewer: What are the good things or the best things about the community?

Kiara (Participant 0005): It's quiet, you know? People don't really bother you. Everybody kind of stays to theirself.

Later, when asked what drew her to the neighborhood, she replied, “The quietness and the rare amount of...[there] is not a lot of drama and stuff, even though it is still, like, a housing community, it's completely different. It's nice.” Like Tanita (Participant 0003), this mom identified her

neighborhood's level of "quiet" and absence of "drama" as principal strengths. Notably, she also pointed to factors denoting weaker social connections ("People don't really bother you. Everybody kind of stays to theirself.") as positive characteristics, which seemingly contradicted her critique that neighbors didn't look out for one another. However, in the context of greater threats to neighborhood safety, keeping to oneself may be adaptive and viewed a marker of a safer, more orderly community, one where other residents do not intrude on or compromise your quality of life. An exchange with Alicia (Participant 0013) lends support to this notion.

Interviewer: Okay, I mean, it sounds like it's difficult, you know. You said you don't like raising her in that neighborhood...can I ask how you manage it?

Alicia (Participant 0013): I keep to myself to be honest about it. When we we're up there, if people's outside I don't really communicate with the people because I don't know them. I don't trust them. So we really keep to ourselves. When we go outside, we say, maybe, 'hi' and 'bye,' and keep it moving.

Alicia's response suggests that parents may eschew getting to know or establishing connections with neighbors when fear of violent crime runs high. More specifically, higher levels of violent crime may breed increased wariness among neighbors. And, in turn, for some parents, choosing not to make connections or build relationships with neighbors may serve as a preemptive bulwark against possible dangers. Indeed, Alicia, subsequently remarked, "I wouldn't say I don't get along with [neighbors]; I just don't speak to them. I try to keep to myself to avoid anything."

Strong versus weak bonds: Black-White differences in quality of neighborhood social environments among middle-income families

Overall, there was a high degree of unanimity between low- and middle-income families on which features of the social environment were desirable, with social connectedness and social trust continually cited as positive attributes. In addition, more nuanced race differences in perspectives on other signifiers of quality were also evinced among middle-income families, with more Black parents listing community quietness as a positive feature.

Importantly, among middle-income families, White participants were more likely to report that conditions in their neighborhoods reflected their preferences and ideals. Specifically, a majority of White respondents (11 out of 13) identified positive elements in their neighborhoods' social environments, including conviviality and helpfulness among neighbors and the ubiquity of families with young children, and notably, a large fraction of these middle-income White parents—Paul (0001), Alexis (0006), Sabrina (0009), Morgan (0020), Rosalind (0025), Kathleen (0034), Kristen (0053)—reported that high levels of social connectedness and strong social bonds among residents characterized their neighborhoods. By contrast, among middle-income African-American parents, there was greater variability in how they perceived their communities, with three respondents citing lower levels of social cohesion and trust among neighbors, three reporting strong social bonds and mutual trust, and three others proffering mixed assessments (i.e., describing both positive and negative characteristics) of their neighborhoods.

The perspectives of several middle-income White parents are summed up nicely in the narrative of Rosalind (Participant 0025), who in an excerpt above described her neighborhood as “perfect.”

Interviewer: ...What would you say is the best thing about it, and what's the worst thing about it? If there is something you would change, what would it be?

Rosalind (Participant 0025): Yeah, I think the best thing about it is this feels like a really quintessential sort of urban family neighborhood. It's very tight-knit, and diverse, and [has] lots of different sorts of people, but everybody kind of gets along. It feels very sort of like throwbacky a little bit.

Narratives centered on the benefits families and children gained from living in communities with high levels of cohesion, trust, and affinity were common among middle-income White parents, with some respondents suggesting that they'd adopted a few neighbors as fictive kin. For instance, for Paul (Participant 0001), the fact that his family is the only one with young

children on his street was counterbalanced or outweighed by the supportive relationships his family had established with neighbors.

Paul (Participant 0001): ...I think there's about ten houses, that are on our street and it dead ends, and we are the youngest. Our children are the youngest of the children on our street. And, in fact, I think there is only one other family that has even school-aged children at all. I didn't know this when moving there, but it tends to be people that are a little bit older, and their kids are now in college. But, what it has resulted in is that we kind of have a lot of ...pseudo-grandparents that are on the street. That it kind of feels like they go over and play at the neighbor's house because their grandkids are out of state...Our kids are their pseudo-grandkids for everyone, and they have pseudo-grandparents around.

Likewise, Kathleen and Jeffrey (Participants 0034a and 34b), a married mom and dad of two young daughters who lived in a higher-income suburban community east of Pittsburgh, both gushed about their neighborhood.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your neighborhood and what you think of it as a place for raising children?

Kathleen (Participant 0034 (Mother)): We have a wonderful neighborhood. We have a very old-fashioned neighborhood. The kids play in everyone's yard, even the homes that don't have young children anymore, no one minds. Running around the street—

Jeffrey (Participant 0034 (Father)): Yeah, because where we live, the cul-de-sac just wraps around, so there's not a lot of through traffic. So pretty much whoever is coming down the street lives on the street, and they're aware of where the children live. So if we're outside playing, they see us, they'll slow down. And everybody watches out for everybody else. This evening, right down the street, the two little ones went up to the neighbor's door, knocked on the door and looked in. They were waving at him, and he came out and said, 'How are you doing?' He's a gentlemen probably in his 60s or 70s at least. And he's like, 'Hey how are you guys doing?' It's very homey.

Kathleen (Participant 0034 (Mother)): It's a wonderful neighborhood.

Jeffrey (Participant 0034 (Father)): They all just watch out for everybody really.

Notably, for these parents, the fact of "everybody watches out for everybody else," which denotes social trust and reciprocity, is tied to their comfort with their children engaging in free play outside.

Similarly, middle-income Black parents also indicated that mutual trust was a necessary condition for their feeling comfortable allowing children to play both outside and at neighbors' homes. Yet, Black parents were more likely to express apprehension about their communities and

neighbors. For example, Jasmine (Participant 0008) expressed a range of concerns, including the prevalence of older unsupervised children, dogs, and a lack of sidewalks, as reasons that she did not allow her son to play outside in the neighborhood.

Interviewer: ...What do you think are the best things about where you guys live in like what are some of the challenges...?

Jasmine (Participant 0008): We live, there are kids but they are older than him. The one house they, I don't want to say is not a lot of supervision but they'll let the kids outside and then 'did you check in?' Like the one kid was over hanging out with us and I'm like we've never even talked before, you know. Like you should come over and say 'are you on Megan's list' you know what I mean. I just feel like there were questions that needed to be asked before your kid's just hanging out. And then I don't let [child] go into the other neighbor's yard, you know, like just because I'm just that type of parent. And I don't know, I'm real limited with what he can do. We never play in the backyard because our neighbors have like six dogs and I'm just scared that they're going to get loose. So I don't know I feel like when I go to work I come home and stay in the house like I don't really play outside much and I feel bad about that. Our street doesn't have sidewalks so like, I don't know. I'm never outside and now it's about to be cold so we're really not going to be outside. There is a playground but we very rarely go to that either.

Jasmine's narrative suggests that she didn't know neighbors well, and in turn, viewed with suspicion their failure to introduce themselves and interact with her family before allowing their children to spend considerable unsupervised time at their home. For this reason, she doubted (lacked trust in) the neighbor's ability or willingness to supervise her child and protect his welfare.

In accord with their lower-income African-American counterparts, a few middle-income Black parents also juxtaposed community calm and peacefulness (i.e., quiet) against social disorder and crime. Tonya (Participant 0045) described her neighborhood (a middle-income borough) as "very family-oriented and homey" and referred to its level of quietness multiple times.

Interviewer: And what attracted you to this neighborhood?

Tonya (Participant 0045): It's quiet. I like quiet, secluded areas especially for the kids. Not a lot of... riff raff or violence or anything of that nature.

Few racial differences emerged between high-income Black and White parents' narratives about their neighborhoods' social environments. Again, the general consensus regarding which

attributes (i.e., strong social ties, higher social trust, and larger numbers of young children) featured prominently in the best neighborhoods for raising children persisted among affluent families. Furthermore, the majority of high-income Black and White families reported that their neighborhoods evidenced positive social environments.

3.6.3 Pathways by which proximity to (dis)advantage shapes family stressors: Black-White differences in stressors related to money, balancing roles, and finding time among low, middle-, and high-income families

Money and finances

Across the SES spectrum, financial stressors were an oft-cited major source of stress, casting a shadow over family life and childrearing. Not surprisingly, however, low-income families were more likely to discuss financial problems as fraught stressors when compared to middle-income and high-income families. Racial differences also emerged in these parents' descriptions of their economic stressors, with low- and middle-income Black parents reporting more anxiety-evoking financial stress than White parents. In general, the economic gradient in financial stress was steeper for White families, for whom a step up in economic status was accompanied by a larger decline in reports of financial stress when compared to Black families. In fact, both low- and middle-income Black parents reported high levels of economic strain and were concerned about not being able to fund the variety and quality of investments (e.g., center-based, formal ECEC programs) in children's development they would elect to under ideal circumstances. Low-income and, especially, middle-income White parents seemed to be buffered from such pronounced financial stress because they more often made a conscious decision to have one parent, mothers in all

instances, stay home to provide full-time care for children. At each step up the economic ladder, there were notable declines in White parents' reports about acute financial stress, whereas there were no meaningful declines in narratives centered on economic worries among Black parents until they were affluent. Among the most affluent families in the sample, no parents contended with similar levels of acute economic constraints, pressure, and anxiety as did their lower-SES counterparts; moreover, no prominent race differences emerged in how upper-income Black and White families viewed their economic circumstances or whether they cited dealing with financial problems or stressors.

The emotional and psychological costs of financial problems: Lack of money as a constraint

Financial problems represented a prominent source of stress for all low-income families in the sample. The economic strain on families came from a variety of sources, including the high cost of ECEC programs, unemployment, unpaid child support, and budget constraints. Some parents noted that the costliness of ECEC programs placed a significant economic strain on their families' finances, and three respondents pointed to their spouses' and/or their own employment statuses as constraining their budgets. Notably, several families reported that providing their children with access to enriching activities, such as opportunities to participate in extracurricular athletics and expensive ECEC programs, taxed their budgets and that their investment in such activities led to financial sacrifices elsewhere.

Jillian (Participant 0022), a White stay-at-home mother of six, acknowledged struggling mightily with finances. She and her husband had to budget carefully and had little discretionary income after paying for their basic needs and their children's extracurricular activities and school fees. She and her husband enjoyed few opportunities to splurge on outings or items for themselves. Her responses reflected an internalized feeling of constraint and highlighted the affective

dimensions of those perceived constraints. Specifically, she noted that her husband was roused to anger in response to the financial limits he was forced to live within.

Jillian (Participant 0022): ...We have always have to watch our budget. We basically spend our money on sports, food and you know, gas. That's our thing and we don't try to go outside that at all. Yes, it's very stressful. And then my husband, he works—he's the hard worker and he don't understand why he can't go, you know, buy something for himself. He's the shopper. So he gets very angry that it's not there because there's lunch money too. The kids have to have lunch money.

For Sophie (Participant 0042), another White mom, financial worries were part of a constellation of problems with which she and her family were contending. More precisely, she pointed to her and her husband's long-term unemployment as a central stressor. Their unemployment forced them to move in with her parents and thus to manage all the issues related to living in a multigenerational household, which her husband viewed as a misery. Indeed, this mom said her radically constrained circumstances rendered it difficult to isolate one key stressor since they were all interrelated.

Interviewer: What would you say the major difficulties, stressors, problems, that you contend with, when it comes to having a family, being a spouse, having children?

Sophie (Participant 0042): It's hard for me to look big picture right now because the stressors are that we're living with my parents, in our mid-30s, with a kid, and my husband is miserable living with his in-laws in a small house. That's a stressor. And we've both been unemployed for two years—that's a stressor.

Aniyah (Participant 0023), who was Black and a mother of two, agreed that financial constraints were a major concern. In particular, lack of consistent child support payments from her children's fathers was an underlying reason why she struggled financially. As a result, the full burden of maintaining her household and providing for her children rested on her shoulders.

Interviewer: ...Since you mentioned, you know, that you do the work of a RN but you don't get paid the same salaries, do you feel like you financial struggle?

Aniyah (Participant 0023) (Mother): Definitely...definitely financial. I have kids by two separate men. And my son's father, he helps a little. [Child 1's] father nothing. And I don't sue for child support either. But yeah, it's really hard. I don't think I should have to sue

you for child support for you to help me with your child. So, I don't sue. So, basically they are both all on me. But again [child 2's] Dad does help a little. We communicate through my mother.

Taylor (Participant 0024), a Black home healthcare aide and single mom, offered that “[t]rying to provide” for her family is “really hard and stressful sometimes.” Covering her basic needs consumed much of her income, leaving her with little in the way of discretionary income or savings. She lamented that she doesn't qualify for or receive any type of government assistance despite her limited income.

Interviewer: I like to ask families, you know parents what are some of the major stressors that you think you deal with when it comes to family life and raising children? So what would you say are the major difficulties that you deal with when it comes to family life?

Taylor (Participant 0024): Trying to provide. I mean that's really hard and stressful sometimes. You know trying to make sure all my bills are paid and have food in my house. I don't get any type of government assistance or anything. So it can be really hard sometimes because they're telling me I make too much money to get anything but when I look at my bank account after my bills are paid, I feel like I should be given some type of help.

Sacrificing money to gain time with kids: Mothers' household labor as a resource

Low-income White families exhibited less intense financial distress, when compared to low-income Black families, in part, because they were able to draw on women's household labor as a resource to meet caregiving and enrichment costs for children. Two-parent households were nearly universal among the low-income White families in this sample. The high costs of child care and intense caregiving burdens related to childrearing often led mothers to leave the work force to stay home with their children. These families relied on one income to support their households, and while this decision was often treated as a mixed blessing, there was a general sentiment that the loss of income was offset by the increased time mothers gained with their children.

For example, Diana (Participant 0027) concurred that money was undoubtedly a major stressor. Diana explained that she and husband made a joint decision that she would leave the

workforce and become a full-time stay-at-home parent. Child care costs were prohibitively expensive, and though it was a financial sacrifice, they believed it was the best choice for their family and their wallets.

Diana (Participant 0027): So, we just maybe felt that was a sign that that wasn't what I should be doing and I should be staying home. So, that's what I did and I was home with the kids let alone the cost of daycare. If they had went to day care where I was working it would have been \$1,100 a month for them to go three days a week. And that's pretty much what I would have been working for. We just felt like it was not worth me taking all those extra hours for somebody else to raise my kids, our kids. So, that's kind of what we did. Just struggled through but it is what it is.

Susan (Participant 0033) asserted that finances represented “the biggest stressor” when it came to family life. In particular, she discussed the expense of center-based child care for her young son. Her husband was self-employed, which suggested their household income may be variable. Both of her children attended a well-regarded and pricey private ECEC center, which caters to an affluent clientele. As such, she was keenly aware of the differences between her economic station and those of the other families whose children were enrolled in the center.

Interviewer: Okay. And in terms of family life, what would you say are the major difficulties or stressors that you contend with?

Susan (Participant 0033): Money. Money.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah.

Susan (Participant 0033): I mean my husband is self-employed. So Isaac for example with Carriage House, he has another year before he can start kindergarten and Carriage House has a kindergarten. Sam went three years to Carriage House. Isaac went two. Now he has a break; it's \$1200 a month for kindergarten. I mean and they fill that class so we're definitely, we're definitely not the norm of that school.

Giving children what they need: Financial problems as a constraint on parental investments in children

A plurality of low-income Black respondents indicated that meeting their basic household financial obligations and addressing their children's economic and developmental needs were difficult to manage. Compellingly, in contrast to their White peers, a common theme running through low-income Black parents' responses was an even more heightened sense of constraint

owing not only to their precarious economic circumstances but also greater limits on the time and money they could invest in their children. All but one low-income Black mom in the sample were single parents, meaning they often simply had fewer resources to draw from when it came to meeting the financial and time demands of raising children.

Imani (Participant 0021), for example, worked an evening shift at a local hospital, and her mother babysat her son while she worked. Imani, a single parent whose [former] boyfriend and father to her son was incarcerated, said that an inability to spend as much time with her son as she wanted, and as he needed, was a significant stressor for her. She worried that she couldn't always discipline him or guide his behavior given her work shift. For Imani, "finances and managing time are two of the big stressors," yet she later explicitly refuted the notion that she was struggling financially; instead, her concerns about money seemed inextricably tied to her worry that having to work non-standard hours placed involuntary limits on the time she could spend with her son, meaning she was constrained in her ability to guide his behavior and influence his development in the manner she saw fit.

Interviewer: ...What would you say are the major stressors or difficulties that you deal with when it comes to having a family and raising a son?

Imani (Participant 0021): It is the time. Like I said, me not being there – it kills me that—even as far as discipline. If he's having a bad day at school, how in the heck am I supposed to discipline him within the five minutes that I'm picking him up from school and dropping him off at my mom's house for the rest of the day? Because she doesn't implement anything. "Whatever. Just leave me alone, just as long as he's safe." She doesn't care what he does; what he doesn't do. You know? So, just managing time, finances, and I guess that's pretty much it. I would say just being the best mom I can be, but that kind of comes with the time, because it's like you're trying to put all that together. So I would say finances and managing time are two of the big stressors, if I answered that correctly.

As illustrated in exchange above, Imani was deeply concerned about not being to, in her view, "give [her son] what he needs" given her work schedule. More specifically, she expressed acute frustration with her current circumstances, saying how "upsetting" it was to feel like she was

“struggling financially” given that she sacrificed time with her son in order to work, support her household, and do her best to ensure her son did not want for anything.

Imani (Participant 0021): And that’s why it’s upsetting when you feel like you are struggling financially. No, I’m not struggling financially how bad it can be – believe me, I’m grateful for what we have, but it does get a little frustrating because it’s like I don’t want to be where I’m feeling like I can’t give him what he needs or, you know, or he doesn’t have anything like I felt like I didn’t have, you know?

Racial differences in the economic gradient in financial stressors

When comparing the degree and intensity of financial stressors reported by low-income and middle-income families, there were marked reductions among White families, but not among Black families. Only two middle-income White parents mentioned cited monetary problems as stressors, and just one of those parents named finances as significant stressor rather than just an occasional concern. Notably, White middle-income parents did not report what, if any, compromises they had to make due to economic constraints. Indeed, in contrast to their middle-income Black peers, there were no references to feelings of anxiety, pressure, and vulnerability due to financial problems. In contrast, a plurality of middle-income Black parents cited financial problems as a major stressor. In general, these Black respondents did not have access to wealth reserves that would buffer against financial emergencies, facilitate homeownership (especially in advantaged communities), or enable investment in enriching learning and leisure activities for children. This lack of economic security increased middle-income Black parents’ feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and vulnerability to the vagaries of fate. For at least one middle-income Black mom, her economic worries were closely tied to other stressors, including her role as a single parent with few opportunities for respite.

When asked to list which stressors associated with family life and childrearing she and her partner experienced, Aisha (Participant 0002) was quick to respond, “Money, honey.” According

to Aisha, economic constraints represented a significant obstacle to her and her partner's ability to invest in some developmentally-enriching resources for their son, namely high-quality center-based child care and other formal extracurricular activities. Although this mother believed that she and her partner earned reasonably well, she noted that she had little to no discretionary funds at her disposal after paying for her student loans and ECEC costs. As a result, this parent had to compromise and send her son to a home-based ECEC program, which was a safe, affirming environment for her son but did not provide the same supports for buoying kindergarten readiness and academic enrichment that her preferred ECEC program did.

Interviewer: ...[W]e talked about not having enough time spending time making sure you have time for yourselves, for the both of you, are there other types of stressors?

Aisha (Participant 0002): Yes, money. Money, honey. Yes, that's a big barrier. And me and him both have decent jobs. Based on our income we'd be considered middle class. But for me, it's not about how much is coming in, it's about how much is going out and how much we can keep. And I have student loans so whatever, between student loans and childcare so that really ate up my money. I was like in the red every single month having to you know dip into my little savings until my savings is just like okay too bad I don't really have one. What am I going to do? So that's prohibitive in terms of just thinking back to high-quality child care. You know it's just not affordable. Which means it's not accessible because we're in that income space where we make too much for the [subsidized child care program], but we don't make enough to comfortably pay the tuition payment so that leaves families like us kind of out in the cold. Which is why he didn't go to a formal preschool until he was five. Essentially. That's not how we wanted it but that's just, but I wasn't going to just put him anywhere either. So you know if it was a place that was just like East Side High or something I wasn't going to do it. So I'd rather him stay in this space where okay there's a couple of kids here but there's this caregiver who I know, trust and love and he will be okay in this space. He is safe in this space. And then you know all the activities that cost money. You know like I said where there are other...you know I'm sure other activities out there where maybe they do have scholarships, we make too much money to get them. But we need them! So financials are a barrier. Definitely.

According to Aisha, the burden of student loans combined with paltry savings also erected a barrier to homeownership for her family. In fact, she recounted having to liquidate her retirement account in order to cover her basic expenses each month.

Interviewer: ...So do you feel like you ever have trouble making ends meet or is it just

that you don't have enough? Is it more wanting to save more or wanting to do certain things...?

Aisha (Participant 0002): I mean there's, it's a combination. It's a combination of things. I mean I'm still working to try to save more money and if not for cashing, I had to cash my 401K. I didn't want to do that but I just didn't have any money. I didn't have any savings. Like I said I was in the red every single month. So and it's been that way for a while and now we're finally are in public school so we don't have to pay the lofty tuition rate. So it's just okay now I'm going to try to save a little something. It doesn't always happen though. And you know with him [her partner], he has an older daughter. She's in college now, as well, so he's helping out with tuition for her. Before that, she was going to Winchester. He was paying for tuition for her there. So, based on just like bills, you know, our income is different. He pays the household bills. And then I provide, I was paying for the child care and most of the food and you know a couple of other household bills. But I'd say making ends meet, and then saving money are definitely challenges for me and I have like a decent job but it's still difficult for me to do. And my student loans are definitely like you know that's my contribution to a mortgage. I don't, that's where that would come from but I can't do it, you know. So even thinking about home ownership and those kinds of barriers, because if you want a home you want it be in a good neighborhood. You want it to be in a good space, but it's significantly more expensive. So just being able to, you know, do that isn't easy. We're not there yet, even though we have decent paying jobs, and he has a better paying job than me. But, we're not there yet.

For Aisha's family, the goal of homeownership remained frustratingly out of reach.

Aisha (Participant 0002): Yeah, we're still renters. I'm even questioning, now I'm even questioning like well, weighing the pros and cons between renting and home ownership and you know investing in a space. But how much money do we need to make in order to really be...do that comfortably to move? You know so it's a lot of things that we're thinking about. And we're both in our late 30s. We're still not there yet. Still haven't gotten there yet.

Similar to other respondents, Renee (Participant 0031) agreed that "money obviously is a big stressor." Economic constraints, including lack of access to wealth, meant she had to focus on using her income to meet her basic financial obligations and support two children attending college. Consequently, she could not afford to invest financial resources into leisure activities, such as vacations, and felt constrained in her ability to relocate to a "different and better environment." This mother also discussed feeling beset by daily worries about wanting to move as well as uncertainty about how she would manage if a major financial calamity befell her.

Renee (Participant 0031): ...I mean money obviously is a big stressor. Having enough of it to do the things you need to do, and also wanting to do some things you wanted to do, you know like vacations, that is something we don't get to do you know because we are just making ends meet you know, so finances I think you live day to day just hoping that nothing goes wrong, that the car is okay you know and that there is not some major catastrophe with one of the older kids that is going to cost money that you really don't have, so that is always a stressor or worry or sort of a fear, I guess you could say that if something happens I don't have that extra money cushion to deal with it so you know you get through each day and you think made it through that day, tomorrow is another day. You know all these things are wanting to be able to live in a different, and better environment you know and be able to provide that. So that is a stressor just daily thinking about the idea of wanting to move, where do I move? you know the finances to do that when is the best time for that, you know I have two kids in college so financially that also adds to the stress you know, getting the one son who is all the way out in Alabama so you know getting him back and forth you know, and then my other son just started and at some point he is going to transfer from community college and then I have a 16 year old that is going into college, he plays football in high school so during football season we are going to all these games and there are practices.

Tonya (Participant 0045) described enduring several stressors, including but not limited to her economic circumstances. The joint stressors of being a single parent, having limited help with child care and thus no personal time for herself, and paying bills contributed to her being "stressed a lot." Joseph (Participant 0049), a married, working father who coaches youth sports, said acting as the sole breadwinner while his wife completed law school was a significant source of stress for him, explaining, "...with my wife in law school, presently I'm the only wage earner, so that's a lot of stress at times."

High-income parents pointed to a range of issues related to family finances: the difficulty of paying for student loans, ECEC program costs, and other child-related expenses; a spouse's shift from a salaried employee to an entrepreneur; and the difficulty of always sticking to a budget. Despite these challenges, none of these parents discussed economic constraints in ways that reflected acute feelings of anxiety and vulnerability, nor did they describe not being able to meet their financial obligations or having to compromise on which resources they invested in their

children. Additionally, no substantive race differences emerged among high-income parents when it came to financial stressors.

In sum, finances, including how best to prioritize competing economic demands and how to manage budgetary shortfalls, were a common stressor among parents. However, low-income families in particular were subject to greater economic constraints. Yet, among low-income families, Black respondents reported higher levels of economic pressure, which was in part linked to racial differences in family structure. White low-income families were typically two-parent households wherein mothers were not in the labor force and cared for their children full-time. Only one low-income Black mother, who was in a committed, cohabiting relationship, was a stay-at-home parent. Most low-income Black parents were employed, and some detailed the difficulties of supporting a household and raising children as a single parent. In general, both low-income and middle-income Black parents reported heightened levels of economic strain, worry, and vulnerability. Middle-income Black families' class status, in particular, appeared more precarious when compared with their White counterparts. At the upper-end of economic spectrum, fewer families reported the levels of economic pressure and strain evident among their less affluent peers. Moreover, racial differences in the type and intensity of financial stressors were not evident among high-income parents. This finding is likely driven by the high levels of affluence among the Black families represented in the study sample. These high-income Black participants also closely resembled their White counterparts in family structure, with most Black upper-income families comprised of two-parent households.

Balancing roles and finding time

Many parents reported experiencing stress related to balancing multiple work and household responsibilities with their parenting duties, and relatedly, finding time for self-care and

cultivating relationships with spouses and partners. Stressors related to managing competing responsibilities and feeling overwhelmed by the hectic nature of family life were shared across race and by families at every income level. However, race differences emerged in how parents responded to and coped with those stressors, while SES differences appeared in the resources parents could rely on to mitigate and counteract such stressors. Among low-income families, White moms felt they bore the brunt of most household maintenance and childrearing. Low-income African American moms, however, did not discuss the particular burdens they carried as single parents, and often reframed their narratives to focus on the positive aspects of their roles. Among middle-income families, stressors related to time and balance continued to color parents' narratives; yet again, Black and White parents differed in how emotionally fraught such stressors were and the degree to which they set reasonable limits on demands on their time. Finally, role balance and finding time to meet competing obligations were universal themes for all but the high-income Black parents, whose additional work flexibility may have buffered them from the worst aspects of such concerns. By contrast, these stressors continued to mark the experiences of high-income White parents, though their greater workplace flexibility and latitude seemed to mitigate against some of the worst aspects of these worries.

A “delicate balance”: Managing work, home, and childrearing responsibilities

A majority of low-income White parents (8 out of 10) cited balancing work, household, and childrearing duties as major stressors. Although only two low-income White mothers, Haviva (0010) and Tove (0014), reported working outside the home full-time, most of these moms said wearing multiple hats and balancing competing daily responsibilities left them feeling harried. Low-income White parents (who were all mothers) in this sample, said their roles as the “default parent” contributed to their heightened stress levels. That is, they indicated that household

responsibilities were distributed inequitably between them and their spouses, with most of the household management and childrearing duties falling on their shoulders. (Feminists have labeled such inequities as a manifestation of the “invisible labor” or “emotional labor” disproportionately borne by mothers.) Yet, while a majority (7 out of 10) of low-income Black parents (who were also all mothers) noted feeling constantly busy and described hectic schedules involving paid employment, household management, and childrearing, for the most part, they did not reference this additional burden of “invisible” labor, even though their status as (for the most part) single mothers meant that all the work associated with maintaining and supporting a home and raising children inevitably landed at their feet.

Tove (Participant 0014), who was employed full-time in a family business, discussed the double duty that she experienced and which was a common theme for several of her low-income White compatriots.

Tove (Participant 0014): ...I think the stressors, for me personally, my stressors would be feeling that I am the default parent. I know that I am a default parent; we agreed to that. But those moments where my husband will need to go somewhere on a Sunday, which happens often at this time of year, for work, that stresses me out so much because it's like ‘Oh, I am a default parent.’ There is no ...if I want to do something, I have to find childcare for my kids. Whereas if my husband wants to do something, I’m going to watch the kids. So...OK, that's one of my major stressors.

Diana (Participant 0027), who had only recently returned (part-time) to the labor force and worked 15 hours per week, said she struggled to manage her return to work, her son’s behavioral problems, and her role as the household manager.

Interviewer: So, I typically like to ask, especially two parent families about how do you manage or negotiate the balance of doing the hands on stuff? Who is going to be with this child? Who is going to do, you know, do the household management...making sure everyone gets where they need to get?

Diana (Participant 0027): That's pretty much me.

Interviewer: That's you.

Diana (Participant 0027): Yeah... We have been over this a lot of different times and it's almost just easier for me to do it. Like I said I kind of like to be in control of things, and he is the type of person that wants to make sure that he is doing what he is doing correct.

The additional anxiety associated with trying to balance competing responsibilities contributed to increased parenting stress among low-income White parents, left them physically exhausted or drained their emotional reserves, and undermined their ability to spend as much quality time with their children as they would prefer. For example, Haviva (Participant 0010), who was employed full-time as a director at a parochial early preschool program, said finding the wherewithal to devote energy to her children at the end of a long work day could sometimes be challenging and required advance planning on her part as well as assistance from her husband.

Interviewer: So, I want to shift gear just a little bit and ask about stressors associated with family life. Are there regular stressors that you guys deal with on a routine basis and what would those be?

Haviva (Participant 0010): Well, you see I have a work life, so that's a stressor...[B]eing able to balance being a working mom and coming home tired and then trying to give that energy to my children is something that I'm trying to balance. And I'm finding that the more I take care of myself during my work day the more energy I have for my kids. It just seems intuitive, but takes some forethought, and also making sure that my husband gives me those five minutes to take off my shoes, [and] put my purse away... So that's a big stressor...just being able to get everything in.

Tove (Participant 0014) acknowledged that balancing work and parenting sometimes challenged her and husband's ability to respond with as much patience as they'd wish toward their child.

Tove (Participant 0014): As a family, I think with both of us working, we tend to be more stressed out in general because both of us work longer hours and I feel like that gets taken out on our kids frequently, you know. They do normal kids things, and it's like 'Stop, just stop crying. Stop this, stop that.' Our daughter just went through...she had an ear infection, and then she was teething, and then there was two weeks straight of her getting up two, three times a night. It got to the point where it was like, 'We have to sleep. You have to sleep too.' And we would be like 'Stop. Just stop crying.' That's not...she is a baby, and she is teething and had an ear infection. And so I feel like...I don't know— because I have never been a stay-at-home mom. But, I feel like if that was my only job, and if I could catch a nap during the day, I might be more amenable to like 'Okay, I am going to be up with you until all hours of the night.' ...I feel like we had completely full lives... [W]e had scheduled every bit of every day, and then we added two kids into that mix. And so, it's

like if any little thing throws off the very delicate balance that we have in place, it's difficult to cope in that moment.

Crystal (Participant 0039), a part-time nanny and student whose position allowed her to bring her child with her to work, also agreed that wearing multiple hats and balancing work, school, and family were significant sources of stress.

Interviewer: What would you say are the major difficulties or stressors that you deal with when it comes to family life and raising a child?

Crystal (Participant 0039): Everything. Really everything. Trying to balance everything—there's not enough hours in the day. Between work, and school, and seeing my husband, and spending time with her [motions to child] where I feel like she has me enough. Seeing my extended family, cleaning, cooking, trying to fulfill all the roles that come with growing up. I think that's where my biggest stress is because there are some days where I have an exam and I need to study. And she's crying because she wants me, and I have to tell my husband that he needs to watch her, and I have to leave the house because I need to get it done. So feeling like I'm subpar, when I feel like I'm doing everything I can to make everything better, not feeling that's enough, that sets me off instantly.

Low-income Black mothers also highlighted the challenge of and stress associated with balancing multiple responsibilities and roles. Yet, the specific circumstances contributing their hectic schedules differed dramatically. First, compared to their White counterparts, the low-income African-American moms in this sample were not only more likely to have full-time paid employment, but also to work nonstandard hours. Second, all but one low-income Black mom were single parents, meaning they had to manage their roles as working mothers under a different set of constraints than their White counterparts. Nevertheless, unlike their White peers, these African American moms did not express the same frustration with serving as the “default parent”—a role they implicitly assumed out of necessity given the aforementioned disparities in family structure. Notably, however, these African American moms also rarely discussed (explicitly) the unique challenges of being a single parent, or hypothesized how and whether the stressors they identified might be alleviated if they had a residential spouse or partner. Moreover,

the Black moms downplayed the stress they experienced when it came to their competing duties or highlighted the positive features of family as a mitigating factor, which suggests the ability to deal with stressful conditions by reframing their experiences or perspectives might be a source of strength for these parents and their children. Indeed, in contrast to their White peers, the low-income African American moms, for the most part, did not report feeling that their patience with and responsiveness to their children suffered due to their heightened stress levels.

Remarks by Tanita (Participant 0003), who was employed 40 hours a week as a training coordinator at a non-profit agency serving individuals with developmental disabilities, typified both the real challenges associated with wearing multiple hats as well as the reframing that helped her cope with those challenges.

Tanita (Participant 0003): So it's a hard thing to balance, I definitely pray every day that I can add more hours to the day. Because just, I feel like I blink my eye and my day is over. And sometimes I feel like I don't accomplish things. But then I sit back and think about what I did for the day. And then I'm just like, even though I didn't do everything I wanted to do, but I did mostly everything I was supposed to do. My work day gets very hectic and some days I will have a plan about how I gotta... these one thousand things I gotta conquer, I do not have a training class or anything today, and the days just go completely different because so many people walk into the office and are calling—I'll put my phone on do not disturb and people will pop up into the office.

Kiara (Participant 0005), who worked 40-plus hours a week as a pharmacy technician and hair stylist, was raising three children. Her youngest child, Penny, had developmental delays and participated in speech and other therapies three days per week. Though days on which her daughter attended therapy were especially long, she said matter-of-factly, “But, I have to do what I have to do.” For this mom, rest came only on Sunday.

Interviewer: So, on the weekends, is it pretty busy for you guys, or can you unwind..?

Kiara (Participant 0005): No. We are busy because I work on Saturdays. I have three jobs so I balance everything out...I mean I don't work as late as I do during the week, so that's a good thing. I do try to take the twins to like the football games but Paris does come along.

Yeah we try to do something regardless if I am working or not. Normally, Sundays are my unwind day.

Raina (Participant 0015), who was unemployed but studying business at a local community college, also illustrated the reframing that several low-income African American moms employed.

Interviewer: ...Are there any stressors that you feel like you deal with on a regular basis when it comes to raising a family or raising kids...?

Raina (Participant 0015): It's hard balancing school, but I just, when I come home to her, it makes me so excited. I'll come home. I'll fix her a snack. We'll take a nap, and she'll just fall asleep. Then she'll wake up, I'll cook dinner. And I just, I'm always trying to be with her.

Overscheduled lives: Managing obligations and meeting expectations

Experiencing stress related to maintaining balance among competing responsibilities and finding time to meet all obligations remained a recurring theme among middle-income Black and White parents. Despite these similarities, subtle differences emerged in middle-income parents' narratives. Specifically, about half of the White parents (6 out of 13), who were primarily (but not exclusively) mothers and who were more likely to work full-time outside the home, lamented how overscheduled their and their families' lives were, yet did not indicate that they were consigned to "default parent" status nor did they express frustrations about an inequitable division of labor in their homes. At the same time, nearly every middle-income African American parent (8 out of 9) mentioned sometimes struggling with balancing their duties as working parents and meeting their myriad obligations. Like their lower-income Black counterparts, middle-income Black parents (all of whom worked full-time), in general, did not note feeling additional pressure because they served as the default parent in their households. This despite the more varied family structure evident among the middle-income Black respondents: Three were single; three were cohabiting; and three were married. Relatedly, African American parents tended to engage in greater minimizing when

discussing the stressors they contended with, or referenced them in less fraught terms—similar to the low-income Black respondents’ pattern of reframing.

Middle-income White parents often reported feeling constantly busy and stretched thin, enjoying little respite from the hive of activity which structured their daily lives. For example, Sabrina (Participant 0009), who worked part-time as a mobile therapist, remarked on the hectic pace of her family’s life.

Sabrina (Participant 0009): ...I feel like we are constantly busy. We don’t really have, I shouldn’t say we don’t have time to relax...But, I just feel constantly busy constantly, like have a list of what to do next. And I don’t know, I guess that’s just where we are with our lives at this point, where we’ve gotten [older child’s] involved in quite a bit. And now I feel like [younger child’s] coming up, and so I want to continue that just because it has been really, really helpful for [older child] I believe. But, yeah, it just makes things busier.

Likewise, Morgan (Participant 0020) said her thoughts continually revolved around her family’s schedules, going through a mental checklist of what she had to accomplish in a given day.

Morgan (Participant 0020): ...I’m constantly thinking about it. Yeah, so we now have a shared Google calendar and my husband’s like, ‘Why do you put so much stuff on there?’ Because I won’t remember. Like it’s even as simple as, I don’t know, ‘Call the doctor’ or ‘Call the plumber,’ the most basic [tasks]. All my to do list is on my Google calendar, and it pops up at me at certain times during the day because otherwise it’s just too much spinning in my head. And then I lay in bed at night, and it’s there. If I can say, ‘It’s on the calendar, you’ll get to it,’ then it makes it easier.

Sandra (Participant 0004), who worked part-time in quality improvement at a local hospital, said dealing with child care as a working parent was a significant source of stress.

Interviewer: Are there any particular stressors that you deal with when it comes to family life, raising kids, balancing work life...?

Sandra (Participant 0004): All those things are stressful. The thing that’s most current is that preschool starts at 9:00 am and it ends at 3:00 pm. I signed up for after-school care, but unless enough parents sign up, it is not offered. So I was apparently the only one who wanted it. ...Those are not good times for any person who has a job. So we really struggled to find a way to get him from his preschool to his sitter...None of the parents at the preschool are willing to drive him, even though there’s plenty of them from our neighborhood, and maybe to some degree it was because they didn’t know me when I was asking at the beginning of the school year. But that was really stressful. I was losing sleep;

I was legitimately physically stressed by it.

But, this mom also admitted that she suffered from self-imposed pressure to be more productive, expressing guilt and taking herself to task for not meeting her own expectations for successfully maintaining a household and caring for young children.

Sandra (Participant 0004): Otherwise it's just like the day to day, trying to figure out how to do all the things that they need, get the house cleaned. But also, I don't know. I always struggle with nap time. I feel like I should be doing during nap time. I should be cleaning and doing those kind of things so that during awake time I can play. But I find that I want to sit still by myself and watch television during nap time instead. And when they are awake spend my time cleaning and doing things I shouldn't when they are awake because I should be playing, you know. So figuring out a schedule that works for us is definitely not something I have done a very good job of or at least not to my satisfaction.

This was a concern shared by some middle-income Black parents. Yet, they adopted a perspective that also emphasized the need for self-care and acknowledged the necessity of setting limits to avoid the worse pitfalls of overscheduling and being pulled in multiple directions. Aisha (Participant 0002), who worked full-time as an outreach coordinator for a school readiness initiative, discussed the challenges of being a working parent.

Aisha (Participant 0002): But also you know as a working parent it's hard to shuttle your child to these different activities especially when on the weekday when they start at 4:30, but you don't get off work til 4:30, so can you leave work a little early to pick him up where's at, get his clothes changed from there? You know, it's just like an added thing that I don't always have the time or the energy for honestly. But I know have to do something.

But, she placed this desire to “do something” into a broader perspective of self-care and limit setting.

Aisha (Participant 0002): You know, there's so many things I want to do, but sometimes I just want to sit on the couch and not do anything, you know. So, again, it's just that balance of making sure that I'm taking care of myself, and that I'm doing things for me and not feeling guilty about doing things for myself. Before I become a super-duper giver, in terms of outside of my home, I want to make sure that my foundation is solid.

Jamila (Participant 0046), who was employed full-time as an executive director of a nonprofit organization, and also operated a small business, similarly highlighted the importance of balancing care for self and care for others.

Interviewer: What would you say are the major stressors or difficulties that you deal with when it comes to family life and raising children?

Jamila (Participant 0046): I think that the major stressors are...just like the love-hate stuff, like the things you love to do. I think because I'm in a direct community serving capacity, probably just dealing with the expectations of serving people all the time, you know. It's like I see myself as a servant leader, but at the same time, you know, you have to balance to make sure that you're doing things for yourself and that you're not always available to everybody all the time or living up to other people's expectations. So, that's probably like the biggest stressor. Because I am interested in so many different things, you know, being able to say, 'Okay, I can only do this thing.' I used to be way more active, before I became a parent...Now that I'm pregnant with my second child...I've recognized it's okay to say no. It's okay to just go to work, come home.

Maintaining work-life balance remained a common concern for a majority (6 out of 8) of high-income White respondents. Overall, higher-income White parents' narratives painted themselves as less harried, though no less busy, than their low- and middle-income White counterparts. For upper-income White parents, who were more likely to be in the labor force than their less affluent White peers, the need for negotiation and flexibility at home and at work emerged as important themes in their narratives. Increased flexibility and autonomy in their professional lives played a key part in helping them balance competing responsibilities and roles. More precisely, these affluent parents consistently referred to the benefits they gained from having flexible, self-directed work hours, which made it simpler for them to manage their parenting duties.

Karina (Participant 0007), who worked about 30 hours per week as a grant writer at a nonprofit, emphasized the importance of her professional latitude and her willingness to set firm limits on how much work could bleed into her home life to mitigating stress related to family life.

Interviewer: Do you feel that, does your work life or what you do at work, your intellectual engagement at work or stressors at work, ever influence how you parent or even how you think about parenting...?

Karina (Participant 0007): I would say previously it did because I worked more from home. So that would be hard because, initially, he was young and napped a lot and I was able to get a ton done. Even sometimes when he was awake because there wasn't a lot of questioning and what not. But then, the older he got and the more active he got, that would be really challenging because he would wake up. But I knew I had fifteen more minutes of writing in my head whenever I was working, I had to finish and then that would lead to impatience and sort of frustration of not being able to do anything exclusively.

But now that I shifted to only being in the office, I pride myself on that balance. So I don't have work email on my phone. I had a laptop at home in case he was sick, and I was working at home. And I actually just gave that back. So, with the exception of anybody having a stressful day and you have trouble shaking it when you come home and get in the door, I really, I think the work-life balance has been pretty great.

I also sort of don't worry about what's boiling in my email because my boss is pretty great about if something's really that important and you're not here, I will call or text you and we'll take care of it. Otherwise, I'm not expecting fires every morning when I go in or something like that. I feel really lucky in that regard because I know a lot of people don't have that.

Surprisingly, only two high-income African American parents said role balance and finding time were stressors. Why this may be the case is not entirely clear. But, greater professional flexibility and autonomy may also play a central role for these affluent Black parents and their families.

3.7 DISCUSSION

This study used qualitative data from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with an economically-stratified sample of Black and White parents ($N = 56$) with preschool-aged children to understand better the processes through which racial differences in proximity to (dis)advantage may shape early developmental contexts. Parents' narratives were systematically examined in order to explore the ways in which heterogeneity in intergenerational, relational, and spatial proximity to

disadvantage shaped families access to resources and exposures to stressors, influenced parents' beliefs about and perspectives on family life, and structured family and community life. The ultimate aim of this work was to inform a conceptual model which describes how race and SES intersect to influence family life, and in turn, children's academic development.

3.7.1 Proximity to relational (dis)advantage: Black-White differences in financial support

Turning first to one dimension of relational (dis)advantage, which considers whether families could count on their parents and extended family for financial assistance in times of need, the study found that most parents could turn to family for help under at least some circumstances. However, sizeable race differences emerged in parents' narratives about family financial support. In particular, White families had greater access to substantive financial support than Black families at each level of SES. That said, there were some nuanced Black-White differences among middle-income and upper-income parents when it came to how comfortable parents felt with receiving economic aid. White middle-income and affluent parents received considerable assistance with major purchases (e.g., education). Not only were middle-income and affluent Black parents less likely to receive these substantive forms of assistance, they also less often received the modest forms of support that their low-income Black counterparts received to meet basic needs. Additionally, among middle- and high-income White parents, there was genuine appreciation for but no expressions of anxiety about receiving help. In contrast, Black parents seemed to feel less entitled to and expressed greater inner conflict toward receiving economic assistance, and in some cases, showed less confidence in their relatives' ability to provide financial support.

These qualitative findings lend support to a growing empirical body of literature that examines race differences in economic transfers among kin (both intergenerational and contemporaneous inter-household transfers). Ethnographic research has shown how poor and low-income racial and ethnic-minority mothers rely on kin networks for financial and other forms of social support (Dominguez & Watkins, 2003; Stack, 1975). For example, Carol Stack's classic work, *All Our Kin*, reveals how social relations defined by patterns of mutual aid and obligation enabled families to take care of children, pay the bills, and get to appointments, and thus served as an adaptive tool and instrumental resource. Yet, very little scholarship has examined whether and how economically-disadvantaged White parents leverage their kin networks for support. The current study reveals that low-income White families also benefit from even more substantive economic transfers and other forms of support from kin networks. In particular, low-income White families received considerable financial support from family to make major purchases (e.g. homes or vehicles) and to lessen the financial impact of job loss or other unfortunate financial set-backs that families encountered.

The discomfort that African-American middle-income parents expressed when they received financial support from family is consistent with prior studies showing that middle-income African-Americans not only tend to feel a strong sense of obligation to provide economic aid to disadvantaged relatives (McAdoo, 1978; Shapiro, 2004) but also are more willing to offer financial assistance to disadvantaged family members than their White peers. This greater tendency to provide financial support to relatives partially explains the Black-White wealth gap among higher-SES individuals (O'Brien, 2012). The present study contributes to this larger body of research by highlighting how patterns of informal economic assistance differ by race and family income. More

importantly, this study suggests that expectations with respect to such intergenerational and inter-household transfer may vary dramatically among higher-SES Black and White parents.

Most strikingly, parents' narratives suggest that the most important distinctions with respect to the differences in economic support Black and White families benefit from may be in the timing and type of support that is received. Specifically, these findings indicate that, though low-income African Americans may receive modest forms of financial assistance more consistently or routinely, their low-income White peers more often receive support that has a greater impact on their long-term financial standing and on their ability to provide additional resources to their children. Similarly, for middle-income and affluent families, a central issue for ongoing scholarship is to consider how the economic support higher-SES White families tend to receive pays greater dividends down the road and enhances long-term child and family well-being. For example, assistance with mortgage down payments may permit middle- and higher-income White families to save more, build home-equity, and amass other forms of wealth that facilitate substantial investments in children (e.g., high-quality child care, private schools, and travel). For White families, more robust financial assistance may also diminish stress related to economic travails, which can often compromise relationship quality between spouses (or partners) and undermine parenting quality (Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Elder & Shanahan, 2006).

3.7.2 Proximity to spatial (dis)advantage: Black-White differences in parents' perspectives on neighborhood quality among low-, middle-, and high-income families

Turning next to dimensions of spatial proximity to (dis)advantage; across race and income-level, parents shared similar expectations about and preferences for neighborhoods and similar views on

which factors they weighed when judging whether a neighborhood was a good place for raising children. The key differences to emerge were in parents' assessments of neighborhood quality and in the threats to neighborhood quality they identified, with low-income parents of both races noting more problems than their higher-income counterparts, and low-income and middle-income Black parents describing far more serious concerns about neighborhood safety and social environments. Moreover, Black parents' narratives suggest that experience with and worries about violent crime may influence their perspectives on which neighborhood attributes are particularly important to them.

Consistent with the present study's findings, substantial empirical work shows prominent racial differences in neighborhood quality, even among Blacks and Whites with similar economic profiles. Indeed, the wide gulf in the types of communities that SES-matched Black and White families occupy is remarkable (Sampson et al., 2008). Logan (2011) culled census data to explore the links between race/ethnicity, SES, and neighborhood disadvantage across all metropolitan regions in the United States. His findings show that—at every income level—Black families reside in more impoverished communities than do White families. From 2005 to 2009, among low-income families (i.e., those earning less than \$40,000), the average level of neighborhood poverty was 21.8% for Blacks and 12.9% for Whites. During the same period, among middle-income families (i.e., those whose earnings fell between \$40,000 and \$75,000), average neighborhood poverty levels were 17.3% for Blacks and 10.9% for Whites. Among the most affluent families (i.e., those earning more than \$75,000), the mean level of community poverty was 13.9% for Blacks and 8.9% for Whites. Notably, upper-income Black families tend to reside in more impoverished communities than do poor White families. Abundant evidence also shows that the communities Black families (across the SES continuum) reside in not only have higher poverty

rates and crime as well as worse schools, home values, and institutional resources (Alba et al., 1994; Flippen, 2004; Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003; Logan, 2011; Logan & Stults, 1999).

However, much of this existing work focuses on the large within-SES race differences in neighborhood structural characteristics (e.g., average poverty levels) (Massey & Denton, 1993; Pattillo, 2005). Far less research has explored qualitative race differences (among Blacks and White of equivalent SES) in other important community characteristics, such as levels of social cohesion, though a rich literature has examined racial and economic disparities in community social environments (see Sampson, 2012), and a substantial body of theory and empirical scholarship has focused on neighborhood effects on child development (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Leventhal et al., 2015). The current study thus contributes key insights into Black and White parents' subjective views on neighborhood quality, and in particular, on parents' perspectives on what renders a community a good place for raising children.

Notably, the community attributes that Black and White parents prized in this study closely map onto existing theoretical perspectives regarding which neighborhood factors are important for children. Specifically, their narratives outlining which community attributes they viewed as most critical for families and children reflect **social cohesion** (i.e., social connectedness, mutual trust, and camaraderie), **social networks** (i.e., the abundance and type of social ties among residents), **social control** (i.e., informal monitoring and regulation of behavior), and **intergenerational closure** (i.e., the extent to which parents know and interact with their children's friends). Research has increasingly linked these factors, which can be categorized as dimensions of neighborhood social capital, to children's development. For example community social cohesion, social ties, and social control predict achievement scores, likely through collective socialization (i.e., role modeling of adaptive behavior and shared social norms regarding education) (Emory, Caughy,

Harris, & Franzini, 2008). Additionally, parents with larger and more varied neighborhood social ties exhibit more positive parenting practices (Molnar et al., 2016), and relatedly, intergenerational closure, predicts better academic performance (Carbonaro, 1998; Glanville, Sikkink, & Hernández, 2008). For these reasons, the substantial racial differences in community quality revealed in the narratives of low- and middle-income families raises concerns about the potential long-term effects of community social environments on children's academic functioning and may help shed light on one pathway by which proximity to (dis)advantage foments within-SES racial skills gaps.

Strikingly, low- and middle-income African American parents expressed more acute anxieties and stress related to violent crime than did their White counterparts. They were also directly victimized by serious criminal activity more often, whereas there were no direct reports of crime victimization among low- and middle-income White parents in this sample. Importantly, these differences in exposure to crime directly shaped Black parents' parenting decisions, behaviors, and implicitly, feelings of stress. Exposure to community violence, and traumatic experiences with crime specifically, may therefore represent another key pathway by which proximity to (dis)advantage impacts family life, and thereby, child outcomes. Indeed, Sampson et al. (2008) found that exposure to extreme neighborhood disadvantage, including dramatic disparities in violent crime, undermined poor Black children's verbal ability. Similarly, in their investigation of how family and community contexts shape the long-term well-being of low-SES children in Baltimore, MD, Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2014) paint a picture of low-SES Black and White families with essentially interchangeable socioeconomic profiles—marked by similarly low levels of parental schooling, occupational status, and family income. Despite these similarities, the neighborhood conditions of disadvantaged Black and White children differed

dramatically. Specifically, the low-SES Black children were significantly more likely to live in neighborhoods with high rates of property and violent crime. In the end, higher rates of individual psychopathology, including parental depression (Nam, 2012) and anxiety, may flow from this more extensive and entrenched variety of social and economic adversities (Turney et al., 2013). In fact, Linares et al. (2001) reported that maternal psychological distress mediated the connection between neighborhood violence and early childhood behavioral outcomes.

3.7.3 Pathways by which proximity to (dis)advantage shapes family stressors: Black-White differences in stressors related to money, balancing roles, and finding time among low, middle, and high-income families

Finally, reflecting on relations between proximity to (dis)advantage and family stressors, this study highlighted how socioeconomic disparities in resources and investments foment socioeconomic disparities in child development and promote the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage and advantage. In this study, parents' narratives revealed that financial hardship differed by family economic status, with low-income families experiencing greater economic strain than middle- or upper-income families. However, among low- and middle-income families, striking Black-White differences emerged in the intensity of economic constraints and financial hardship, the effects of these constraints on psychological distress, and the access to resources which mitigate the impact of financial hardship. Given the racial differences in access to financial support from relatives and in family structure (especially among low-income families) observed in this study's sample, it is not surprising that parents' narratives revealed notable race differences in a range of family stressors. A more novel insight from this study was the difference in how Black and White mothers

interpreted their time constraints and made sense of their multiple competing roles. First, low-income White mothers narratives aligned with recent feminist commentary on the invisible labor that disproportionately falls on mother's shoulders, though it's important to note that much of this theoretical focus has been on working moms, and especially economically-disadvantaged working mothers (Zimmerman, Haddock, Ziemba, & Rust, 2002). Among the low-income White moms in this sample, their frustration with, yet acceptance of, being the default parent was common, irrespective of employment status and working hours. By contrast, the low-income Black moms rarely lamented their status as the implicit default parent due to their roles as single heads of households (in all but one case). They also cognitively reframed their roles to focus on the benefits and rewards of childrearing that buffered or mitigated the inevitable stress associated with balancing multiple roles.

Role balance theory posits that women often serve in multiple roles and juggle different identities (e.g., mother, employee, wife), and that it is the extent to which those roles and identities are integrated into an organized psychological system that dictates whether playing multiple roles increases or decreases life satisfaction and emotional well-being (Marks, Huston, Johnson, & MacDermid, 2001). Thus, balancing multiple, complex roles can either promote or buoy well-being (the role enhancement hypothesis) or undermine psychological health and life satisfaction (the role strain hypothesis) depending on the meaning individuals attach to these identities and their cognitions related to these identities (Brown & Keith, 2003). Racial differences in ideologies related to motherhood may thus help explain differences in mother's perspectives on the multiple roles they hold in this sample. For example, low-income White mothers sometimes couched their decision to leave the labor force in language that indicated that mothers should be at home caring for their children full-time or an unwillingness to pay considerable sums for someone else to

“raise” their children. Low-income White mothers may be more likely to subscribe to an “intensive mothering” ideology, which views paid employment and out-of-home labor as competing with maternal childrearing responsibilities (Dow, 2011). Conversely, low-income Black moms may adopt a more “integrated mothering” perspective, which sees “working as a duty of motherhood” (Dow, 2011). Interestingly, both ideologies have been observed among middle-class mothers, but may have broader application and exerted greater influence across social classes, given what we know about how perspectives on marriage and family can flow “downstream” from higher-SES individuals to lower-SES individuals (Edin & Kefalas, 2005). It’s also possible that African-American moms are better able to integrate their identities because being financially self-sufficient constitutes an important ethos among low-income Black women (Edin & Kefalas, 2005). Indeed, recent scholarship has found that having gainful employment boosted Black women’s mental and physical health and that employed Black women reported better psychological functioning when they balanced at least two roles (Brown & Keith, 2003). Furthermore, employed low-income, single African-American moms displayed better psychosocial well-being than their unemployed counterparts in the context of father absence (Brown & Keith, 2003).

Another important point to consider is that, to the extent that more positive cognitive reframing is linked with greater parenting locus of control, the reframing found among low-income African-American moms in these interviews may represent an important source of parenting resilience, given the positive associations between parents’ internal locus of control and early child cognitive development (Golding, Gregory, Ellis, Iles-Caven, & Nowicki, 2017; Nowicki, Iles-Caven, Gregory, Ellis, & Golding, 2017). Conversely, if parental psychological reframing instead undermines motivation to address or escape acute stressors that compromise children’s

development, it could be maladaptive. Additional work is necessary to determine patterns of associations between these factors, parenting, and children's outcomes.

With respect to the affluent mothers in this sample, a notable emergent finding was that high-income women tended to report less role strain and conflict and a more equitable division of childrearing and household management duties. This is especially noteworthy given their higher levels of employment and work hours. These affluent moms reported benefitting from more workplace autonomy and flexibility, which seemed to diminish their role strain. Moreover, affluent moms (White mothers in particular more readily addressed this issue) seemed more likely than their low-income White counterparts to see their careers and work life as a core part of their identities and to discuss their work as enjoyable and affirming. Hence, these affluent moms may have a more integrated ideology of motherhood similar to that found among professional African-American women. Again, future research will need to assess these issues in greater depth.

3.8 LIMITATIONS

No study, whether qualitative or quantitative, is free from limitations, and this study is no exception. A major aim of Study 2 was to inform theory and gain insight into how social identities jointly shape parents' lived experiences and thereby children's primary developmental contexts. Yet, out of necessity, this research could not consider all the important social identities that mutually influence individual lived experiences and social contexts. For instance, most of this study's interview subjects were mothers, and it's likely that gender colors parents' perspectives in critical ways and that moms and dads may have different goals when it comes to parenting. For

instance, fathers might be less likely to view the distribution of childrearing and household labor as inequitable. Indeed, working dads whose wives (or partners) take care of children full-time might discuss the stress associated with being the lone wage earner in a family. Additionally, all (four) fathers who participated in this study were middle- or high-income, and all but one were White; as such, this study does not offer the perspectives of low-income Black or White fathers. Lastly, though my aim was to bring an intersectional focus to the study of family life, the intersection of race and SES was the central focus; hence, I did not consider other important aspects of identity that may shape family life and parenting, such as sexual orientation.

Another issue to keep in mind when interpreting these findings is that I was unable to recruit adequate deviant (or negative) cases. Ideally, this sample would have included at least one married (and not only a cohabiting) low-income Black parent as well as an unmarried low-income White parent. Despite repeated targeted recruitment efforts, however, the study team was unable to locate such “contrast” cases. This sample is also primarily urban and suburban; hence, the insights derived from these participants may not reflect the experiences of Black and White families living in rural communities.

Lastly, while using an interview format elicited rich narratives from these parents, it also necessitates that their perspectives alone take center stage. Without the benefit of speaking with other relatives or observing them first-hand as they go about their lives, it’s likely that their representations may not fully capture the complexities of their experiences and their children’s lives, and as with any study, it is important to recognize what remains unanswered.

4.0 GENERAL DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Viewed as a whole, this dissertation project demonstrates the necessity of considering the complexity of inequality. That is, it shows that complex patterns of educational, family, and community inequality can play out differently across race and SES. Racial disparities in cognitive and academic development shape children's life chances, and are only matched in their persistence by similar Black-White disparities in family and school contexts as well as in other spheres of life. An abundant and still growing research literature investigates the Black-White achievement gap. How racial disparities emerge and why they persist remain hotly contested and sometimes controversial questions, especially given how fraught this issue is with the weight of American's history of racial problems. I contend that it will not be possible to elucidate the likely myriad causes of the gap until researchers and policy makers grapple with the reasons why SES alone does not explain racial disparities, and, more importantly, why the Black-White test score gap differs by SES. Accordingly, we must move beyond traditional perspectives on the gap and incorporate evidence and employ more complex, multidisciplinary conceptual frameworks and methodologies to elucidate why the academic and educational returns to SES differ by race.

4.1 PROXIMITY TO (DIS)ADVANTAGE & BLACK-WHITE DIFFERENCES IN THE ACADEMIC RETURNS TO FAMILY SES

This research provides some avenues for further investigation of how race and SES may jointly influence young children's academic development and school readiness. First, study 1 reveals that household income and parental educational attainment do not yield equivalent academic benefits for Black and White children, and that race differences in early skills acquisition underlies, to a significant degree, later patterns of educational inequality among SES-matched Black and White students, especially in math and science performance. Findings from study 2 illustrate the ways in which proximity to (dis)advantage disparately impacts developmental contexts and formative experiences in early childhood and, consequently, illuminates pathways by which within-SES race gaps in achievement may develop and persist.

For example, economic disadvantage and challenges associated with the frantic pace and competing demands of family life and childrearing fomented heightened levels of stress among both Black and White families, which in turn can tax parents' emotional and psychological resources and thereby impair their ability to interact warmly and sensitively with their children (Conger et al., 1994; McLoyd, 1990). However, compared to their low-income Black peers, low-income White families in this sample benefitted from greater access to more socioeconomically-advantaged kin networks, which provided financial resources and support that not only acted as a buffer against the ravages of extreme deprivation but also enabled greater investment in enriching learning opportunities and activities. In fact, race differences in access to financial support persisted (and in some respects were exacerbated) among middle-income Black and White families. White middle-income families were able to marshal substantial financial resources to

provide a vaster and more diverse array of cognitively-stimulating materials and experiences to their children along with access to safer, more cohesive, and more family-friendly communities. Conversely, with fewer financial resources at their disposal, middle-income Black parents confronted more circumscribed housing and neighborhood choices and possessed less discretionary income to invest in learning opportunities, such as center-based ECEC. Recall Aisha who lamented that financial constraints inhibited her ability to place her son in “high-quality child care” and were the reason he “didn’t go to a formal preschool until he was five.”

In contrast to her middle-income White peers, but similar to her low- and middle-income Black counterparts, economic constraints likewise undermined Aisha’s ability to purchase a home, and as a result, her ability to secure residence in a more hospitable and well-resourced community. Discussing the barriers imposed by financial constraints, Aisha said, “So even thinking about home ownership and those kinds of barriers, because if you want a home you want it be in a good neighborhood. You want it to be in a good space, but it’s significantly more expensive. So just being able to, you know, do that isn’t easy. We’re not there yet, even though we have decent paying jobs, and he has a better paying job than me. But, we’re not there yet.” Her narrative highlights the interconnections between multiple forms of proximity to (dis)advantage and the differential effects they exert on Black and White families’ access to resources, exposure to stressors, and social contexts and experiences. For example, dangerous neighborhood conditions, higher social mistrust, and relatedly weak social ties increased Black parents’ psychological distress and discomfort and seemingly undermined their willingness to let their children play outdoors and engage with peers as well as their own comfort with establishing strong relationships with neighbors. Such parenting decisions, borne out of reasonable fears and efforts at mitigating the threats to children’s safety, can have implications for children’s academic and social development.

First, children in communities wherein parents and children spend considerable time socializing with peers may benefit from richer, more immersive language and learning environments, and potentially, parents may enjoy superior access to privileged social networks that share information about childrearing practices and educational resources and engage in patterns of collective socialization that promote child well-being. Critically, the provision of a variety of enriching learning experiences (Bradley & Caldwell, 1984; Votruba-Drzal, 2003; Yeung, Linver, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002), parental home ownership (Zhan & Sherraden, 2003), neighborhood safety (De Marco & Vernon-Feagans, 2013; Sampson et al., 2008) and neighborhood social capital (Jones & Shen, 2014) have been linked to children's cognitive development, school readiness, and academic performance.

Furthermore, while a wealth of developmental theory and research outlines connections between family stress and child academic and behavioral development (Conger et al., 2002; Raver, Gershoff, & Aber, 2007), findings from study 2 suggest that disparities in exposure to economic pressure and physical and psychological trauma, in particular, may serve as mechanisms through which proximity to (dis)advantage disparately impacts the level and intensity of environmental stressors Black and White families with similar socioeconomic profiles experience. Low-income, African-American mom, Raina, spoke in concrete terms about the psychological and physical toll that her experience as a victim of violent crime exacted on her. She said, "That's why I feel like I'm not working now is because it still hurts when it's cold outside, I feel it in my legs. I'm ready to move. I'm just happy my baby wasn't here." Her narrative reveals a high degree of persistent psychic vigilance, "We don't go outside. And if we do, we go out through the back. And I never catch the bus; I never walk up and down the hill. We normally get in the car and go wherever we

have to go.” In this way, trauma can exert a distinct effect on children’s physical and social environments as well as on their parents’ psychological dispositions.

4.2 CONCEPTUAL & METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING THIS RESEARCH

My research is guided by a conceptual emphasis on intersectionalities in the lives of children and families (O'Connor et al., 2007), or by what is conceptualized methodologically as an “assumption of heterogeneity” (Small & Feldman, 2012). Study 1 illustrates how patterns of educational performance and academic development vary across the SES distribution. Moreover, it reveals that different components of family SES may function disparately for children and families. To understand why this is so, it’s necessary to consider how broader historical and societal patterns of racial inequity structure life experiences. As discussed earlier, differences in proximity to (dis)advantage may help explain why the returns to SES differ for Blacks and Whites. For example, Study 2 shows that affluent Black and White parents and families look far more similar in terms of family financial support, neighborhood quality, and stressors. Furthermore, the demographic data reported by the participants in study 2 reveals that these high-income Black and White families look very similar, or show that Blacks are sometimes even more advantaged, when it comes to average income, education, and wealth levels. Moreover, while I did not report occupational status systematically here, my conversations with high-income parents demonstrated that affluent Black parents often worked in very financially remunerative, competitive, and high-status occupations, and attended top-tier or other selective educational institutions. Hence, while

these families are not representative of the families in the nation at large, conceptually these findings from study 2 may help explain why higher income narrows Black-White achievement gaps, and more specifically, why affluent Black children tend to outpace their peers in math, reading, and science skills.

Another critical point is that a focus on intersectionality underlines the limitations of the analytic tendency of implementing statistical controls in attempt to isolate or determine the independent contributions of separate demographics characteristics, such as parental marital status or maternal employment status, to racial achievement gaps. Yet, given the large distributional differences in family structure among Black and White Americans (one-third of Black children lives with two parents versus nearly three-fourths of White children who do so), adjusting for such differences may obscure important insights into the origins of achievement gaps (Child Trends Databank, 2015). Among low-income families, differences in family are equally stark, with 83% of low-income Black families being headed by a single parents, compared with 42% of White families (Simms, 2009). Consequently, the meaning attached to single-parent status and the lived experience of single-parenthood likely differ dramatically by race, as indicated to some extent by study 2. Not to mention, it becomes challenging and perhaps even impossible or meaningless to try to disaggregate the independent effects of having a single parent from being Black and growing up in a low-income family, because this constellation of factors so often intersects to shape children's lives.

For similar reasons (distributional differences linked to broader processes of inequality), the context of affluence also likely differs substantively for Black and White families. Nationally, a relatively small fraction (approximately 18%) of Black families have household incomes above \$70,000; by contrast, about 38% of White families do (U.S. Census Bureau). Black parents who

achieve this level of affluence appear to differ from middle-income and low-income Black parents along a number of key characteristics linked to children's achievement, including human capital, social capital, cultural capital, and wealth holdings. Study 2's findings support this contention. Among the highest-income parents, Black families were, on average, more advantaged than their White counterparts in terms of income and wealth.

These findings align with those of sociologist Karyn Lacy, whose ethnographic portrait of middle-class Black families, elucidated important distinctions between lower-middle-class, core middle-class, and elite or upper-middle-class Black households in terms of educational attainment, homeownership, occupational status, and neighborhood SES (Lacy, 2007). Of particular relevance, Lacy observed that Black-White gaps in earnings, homeownership, and community affluence narrowed considerably at the top of the income distribution (i.e., among families earning more than \$100,000). Used to inform the findings from study 1, affluent Black children's achievement advantages may be driven by the more advantaged circumstances that characterize upper-income Black families. Specifically, highly-affluent Black parents enjoy more discretionary income, greater wealth, and more work autonomy; hence, they are likely better positioned to transmit their class advantages to their children than are middle-income Blacks.

4.3 PLACING THIS RESEARCH INTO CONTEXT

Notably, these findings rebut some aspects of Annette Lareau's work on race and SES differences in family life (Lareau, 2011, 2003). While Lareau argues that social class trumps race as a determinant of parenting practices and priorities, it is critical to point out that the two middle-class

Black families included in her intensive ethnographic study reported household incomes of \$100,000 or more. In fact, one of the middle-class Black families earned a combined household income of \$240,000. Lareau's findings therefore likely offer additional evidence that the Black economic elite, in particular—rather than Black middle-class parents, in general—bear remarkable similarities to their White counterparts. Indeed, study 2's sampling plan was designed to better capture the “churning in the middle” that seemed to be lost in Lareau's analysis. The results from this project suggests that 1) middle-class Black children do not derive equivalent achievement gains or advantages from their family SES as do their White peers, 2) later within-SES skills differences can be traced in large measure to skills evinced at school entry, and 3) access to resources, exposure to stressors, pervasiveness of constraints, and how parents operate under these conditions differ markedly for all but the most economically-advantaged families.

Another subtle distinction between Lareau's work and the current project is that she posits that differences in parents' educational and occupational backgrounds differentially shape their “cultural logic” of childrearing (i.e., parenting beliefs and priorities) and that children are disadvantaged because they do not accrue the cultural capital rewarded by educational institutions. In short, different beliefs, priorities, and orientations produce differences in parenting decisions and behaviors. However, the emergent findings drawn from parents' narratives in study 2 reveal that parents often share similar beliefs about what children need and what they wish to provide under *ideal* circumstances. However, the constraints that parents deal with (e.g., non-standard working hours) are routinely the determinative factor shaping their investment in children. For example, recall Imani (Participant 0021) who worked evenings at a local hospital and said not “being there” for her son in the ways she wished “kills me.” Imani's ability to make parenting choices with respect to discipline, guidance, and enrichment were not wholly or only dictated by

her preferences; instead, she had to compromise her preferences in order to meet her financial obligations as a head of household. Of course, one answer is that if Imani had a spouse or partner who could help shoulder the burden, she would face fewer constraints on her parenting choices. This is clearly true. But, it's also important to recognize the ways affluence and professional latitude mitigate the effects of single-parenthood and its related stressors. Notably, Naima (Participant 38), a widowed Black mom who was employed as a business professor at a local university, explained that being "a single mom who has lots of resources" sometimes lessened the intensity of the constraints she operated within. When she received a call from a teacher advising her that only part of a major project arrived at school, and the rest was missing, she was able to address it relatively easily. She said, "Luckily, [my work is] flexible enough, I went home, picked it up. Dropped it off at school."

Ultimately, when examining the myriad influences on development, it is necessary for researchers to consider how individual dispositions, preferences, and agency can be shaped (though not fully determined) by structural constraints. Indeed, I argue that when thinking about how proximity to (dis)advantage differentially impacts family life for Black and White children, it's important to bring a wider analytic lens to conceptualize the downstream consequences of historically-shaped structural constraints. For instance, Black women's historically stronger labor force attachment has been linked to norms regarding work inculcated under bondage as well as to deep poverty and entrenched inequality Black families confronted in post-Civil War America (Boustan & Collins, 2014). Acquiring basic sustenance may have required both male and female economic contributions to the household. However, as this pattern persisted, a cultural or social norm may have taken root across generations, perhaps because Black women recognized that

economic independence afforded them benefits that buffered against some of the effects of gender- and race-based inequality they confronted. Ultimately, to the extent that societal conditions set the stage for development, ongoing research must consider how systemic and structural factors influence the immediate contexts children develop within.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Current neighborhood:

1. Tell me about your neighborhood.
 - a. What type of neighborhood is it?
 - b. What kind of people live here?
 - c. What's good/bad about it?
 - d. What would you change?
2. What do you think of this neighborhood as a place for raising children?
 - a. What kinds of amenities, events, or programs are available for families with children in your community?
3. Tell me about the availability of parks, arts organizations, Boys & Girls clubs, libraries and the like in your neighborhood.
 - a. Which community resources or businesses do you frequent?
 - i. *For example, where do you do your grocery shopping?*
 - ii. *Where do you get housewares/needed household items?*
 - iii. *How accessible are grocery and other stores to you?*
 - iv. *Do you ever use or do you rely on public transportation?*
 - b. Which community resources do you and your child/family use? *Libraries, parks, playgrounds? How often?*
 - i. Why do you and your child/family use these specific resources or engage in these activities?
 - c. What other resources do you and your child/family use in the larger community/in the City of Pittsburgh? *Museums, the zoo, the aviary, the Science Center? How often?*
 - i. Why do you and your child/family use these specific resources or engage in these activities?

Family Life:

Parents engage in many different types of activities with their children. Families might watch T.V., play games, take walks in the park, listen to music, go to the movies, or read together. We're interested in learning about the range of activities you engage in with your child, so I'll ask several questions about what you do at home and in the community. But, to begin, I like to ask what family life is like in general.

1. Can you tell me what a typical weekday is like for you and your child?
 - a. Can you tell me what you did yesterday [specify day]?
 - b. Was that a pretty typical day [specify day]?
2. What is a typical weekend day (Saturday or Sunday) like for you and your child?
3. By the time your child starts KG, what do you believe your child should be able to do?
 - a. Why do you want your child to be able to do these things?
 - b. What types of activities do you engage in with your child to help them learn these things or develop these skills?
4. Can you tell me more about the types of activities you (*and spouse/partner if applicable*) engage in with your child?
 - a. Can you describe what types of activities you enjoy doing together?
 - i. *For example, do you like to watch specific television shows or movies with your child? How often?*
 - ii. *Do you play board games, do art and crafts, listen to or play music, or read together? How often*
 - iii. *What about electronics? Does your child ever use a computer, electronic tablet, or smartphone? How often?*
 - b. Do you have any rules or routines when it comes to these activities?
 - i. *For example, do you play a game, read a book, or watch a show together every evening before bed or are activities dictated by your child's requests?*
 - ii. *What rules, if any, do you have regarding your child's "screen time" or use of electronics? For example, do you set limits on how much television he/she can watch or how long he/she can play video games or use the tablet or computer?*
5. Does your child attend a daycare, childcare, or preschool center?
 - a. (If yes), why did you choose this center?

- b. Can you tell me a bit about what the center is like? *Large? Home-Based? About how many children?*
 - c. What skills do you think your child is developing at the center? How is the center helping your child get ready for kindergarten?
6. Aside from yourself and any center-based daycare or childcare providers, which other people regularly take care of or look after your child?

Work Life:

- 1. What type of work do you do?
 - a. What is a typical workday like for you?
 - b. What are your main duties and responsibilities at work?
 - c. What attracted you to this line of work?
 - d. How much flexibility does your work/job/employer afford you when it comes to your role as a parent?

Stressors:

- 1. What are the major difficulties or problems you deal with when it comes to family life and raising children?
- 2. What is particularly stressful when it comes to family life and raising children?

Family background:

- 1. Can you tell me about the family you grew up in?
 - a. How hard was it for your family to make ends meet?

Probes

- b. *What level of education did your parents complete?*

- 2. Can you tell me a little bit about your childhood upbringing?
 - a. What did you learn from how your parents raised you?

- 3. What type of neighborhood did you grow up in?
 - a. Where did you grow up?
 - b. What type of place was it to grow up in?

Probes

- c. *Possible follow-up question(s): In general, what social class would you say your neighbors belonged to in the community where you grew up?*

- 4. How have your parent(s) helped you in your adult years?
 - a. How have they helped you financially
 - b. How have they helped you with childrearing?

Kin networks, peer networks, social ties:

Family

1. Tell me about your close family. What is your relationship like with your extended family?
2. For what types of help or support can you rely on your family in a pinch or in a difficult time?
 - a. Can you rely on members of your family for help with practical concerns, like babysitting, getting a loan if you are a little short, getting a job lead, and vice versa? Can you tell me a time when you've asked a family for this type of help?
 - b. Can you rely on members of your family for care, understanding, or emotional support during a difficult time? Can you tell me about a time when you've turned to family during a difficult/stressful period or event?
3. What type of schooling do they have?
4. What type of work do they do?
5. Do you ever ask your family for advice about your kids? What type of advice do you receive?

Friends

1. Do you have close friends in this neighborhood or elsewhere? Tell me about your close friend.
 - a. Can you rely on friends for help with practical concerns, like babysitting, getting a loan if you are a little short, getting a job lead, and vice versa? Can you tell me a time when you've asked a friend for this type of help?
 - b. Can you rely on friends for care, understanding, or emotional support during a difficult time? Can you tell me about a time when you've turned to a friend during a difficult/stressful period or event?
 - c. Do you ever ask your friends for advice about childrearing? What type of advice you receive?
2. Do you have friends and acquaintances that reside outside your community/neighborhood? Tell me about those people.
 - a. Can you rely on these folks for help with practical concerns? What about for emotional support or a shoulder to cry on? Can you tell me about a time when you've asked for practical help from one of these friends or acquaintances? What about a time when they've offered emotional support?
3. What type of schooling do they have?
4. What type of work do they do?

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

For Office Use Only

Family Background Questionnaire

ID#:

1) Pre-school Child's Age: _____ years and _____ months

1a) Do you have other children between ages 2 and 5?

Yes _____ No _____

1b) If yes, how many children between ages 2 and 5?

1b) If yes, what are these children's ages? (Please report years and months.)

2) Parent's/Your Age: _____ years

3) Child's Gender: _____ Male _____ Female

4) What is your relationship to the child?

Biological Mother _____ Biological Father _____ Other (Please specify) _____

5) Does the child reside with you? Yes _____ No _____

6) Do you have other children who reside with you? Yes _____ No _____

6a) If yes, how many children? _____

6b) How many **total children** reside with you? _____

7) Which of the following groups best describes you? (Please select one answer only.)

___ 1=Asian or Pacific Islander,

___ 2=Black or African American,

___ 3=White,

___ 4=Native American/American Indian or Alaskan Native,

___ 5=Multiracial, or

___ 6=Other (Please specify) _____

7a) If you are multiracial, which group best describes your **mother's** heritage?

___ 1=Asian or Pacific Islander,

___ 2=Black or African American,

___ 3=White,

___ 4=Native American/American Indian or Alaskan Native,

___ 5=Multiracial, or

___ 6=Other (Please specify) _____

7b) If you are multiracial, which group best describes your **father's** heritage?

___ 1=Asian or Pacific Islander,

___ 2=Black or African American,

___ 3=White,

___ 4=Native American/American Indian or Alaskan Native,

___ 5=Multiracial, or

___ 6=Other (Please specify) _____

8) Are you Hispanic or Latino? Yes _____ No _____

9) What is your highest level of educational attainment? (check only one option):

_____ Did not finish high school/GED program

_____ High school diploma or equivalent

_____ Vocational/Tech program after high school

_____ Some college but no degree

- _____ Associate's Degree
- _____ Bachelor's Degree
- _____ Graduate or Professional Degree

10) Are you currently... (Please select one answer only.)

- ___1 = Married,
- ___2 = Cohabiting/Living with a partner
- ___3 = Dating/In a romantic relationship
- ___4 = Single and Never Married
- ___5 = Single and Divorced
- ___6 = Single and Widowed

11) Including yourself, how many **total adults** reside in your household? _____

11a) Including yourself, how many **total individuals, including all children and all adults**, reside in your household? _____

12) What is **your spouse or residential co-parent's** highest level of educational attainment? (check only one option):

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| _____ Did not finish high school/GED program | _____ Some college but no degree |
| _____ High school diploma or equivalent | _____ Associate's Degree |
| _____ Vocational/Tech program after high school | _____ Bachelor's Degree |
| | _____ Graduate or Professional Degree |

12a) If you are not married or cohabiting, what is **your child's non-residential parent's** highest level of educational attainment? (check only one option):

- _____ Did not finish high school/GED program
- _____ High school diploma or equivalent
- _____ Vocational/Tech program after high school
- _____ Some college but no degree
- _____ Associate's Degree

_____ Bachelor's Degree

_____ Graduate or Professional Degree

12b) Which of the following groups best describes **your spouse or residential co-parent**? (Please select one answer only.)

___ **1**=Asian or Pacific Islander,

___ **2**=Black or African American,

___ **3**=White,

___ **4**=Native American/American Indian or Alaskan Native,

___ **5**=Multiracial, or

___ **6**=Other (Please specify)_____

12c) If you are not married or cohabiting, which group best describes the heritage of **your child's non-residential parent**? (Please select one answer only.):

___ **1**=Asian or Pacific Islander,

___ **2**=Black or African American,

___ **3**=White,

___ **4**=Native American/American Indian or Alaskan Native,

___ **5**=Multiracial, or

___ **6**=Other (Please specify)_____

13) Are you currently employed? Yes _____ No _____

13a) If yes, on average, how many hours do you work per week? _____

14) What would you say your **total household income** from all sources (e.g., jobs, disability and unemployment payments, gifts, public assistance (cash and food stamps), dividends, interest, trusts, etc.) was **last year (2015)**, before taxes and deductions? (**Please report income for all household members.**)

_____dollars

14a) If you are unsure about the exact amount, do you think it was closer to? (Please select one answer only):

___ **1** = \$5,000 or less

___ **2** = \$5,001 to \$10,000

___ **3** = \$10,001 to \$15,000

___ **4** = \$15,001 to \$20,000

___ **5** = \$20,001 to \$25,000

___ **6** = \$25,001 to \$30,000

___ **7** = \$30,001 to \$35,000

___ **8** = \$35,001 to \$40,000

___ **9** = \$40,001 to \$50,000

___ **10** = \$50,001 to \$60,000

- ___ **11** = \$60,001 to \$70,000
- ___ **12** = \$70,001 to \$80,000
- ___ **13** = \$80,001 to \$90,000
- ___ **14** = \$90,001 to \$100,000
- ___ **15** = \$100,001 to \$110,000
- ___ **16** = \$110,001 to \$120,000
- ___ **17** = \$120,001 to \$130,000
- ___ **18** = \$130,001 to \$140,000
- ___ **19** = \$140,001 to \$150,000
- ___ **20** = \$150,001 to \$160,000
- ___ **21** = \$160,001 to \$170,000
- ___ **22** = \$170,001 to \$180,000
- ___ **23** = \$180,001 to \$190,000
- ___ **24** = \$190,001 to \$200,000
- ___ **25** = \$200,001 to \$210,000
- ___ **26** = \$210,001 to \$220,000
- ___ **27** = \$220,001 to \$230,000
- ___ **28** = \$230,001 to \$240,000
- ___ **29** = \$240,001 to \$250,000
- ___ **30** = more than \$250,000

15) What is your current address, including zip code?

16) Do you own the home where you currently reside? Yes _____ No _____

If yes,

16a) About how much did you pay for your home? _____dollars

16b) If you sold your home today and paid off any mortgages or debts attached to it, about how much do you think you would have left? _____dollars

16c) If you are unsure about the exact amount, do you think it would be closer to? (Please select one answer only):

- ___ **1** = less than \$5,000
- ___ **2** = \$5,000 to \$10,000
- ___ **3** = \$10,001 to \$20,000
- ___ **4** = \$20,001 to \$35,000
- ___ **5** = \$35,001 to \$50,000
- ___ **6** = \$50,001 to \$75,000
- ___ **7** = \$75,001 to \$100,000
- ___ **8** = \$100,001 to \$150,000

___9 = \$150,001 or more

17) Do you own a vehicle (e.g., car, truck, etc.)? Yes _____ No _____

18) Do you (or does anyone in your family household) have any money in checking or savings accounts, money market funds, certificates of deposit, government savings bonds, or Treasury bills, including in retirement accounts (i.e., IRA or 401k)?

Yes _____ No _____

If you added up all such accounts (for your entire household), about how much would they amount to right now? (Please circle one answer only):

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___1=Less than \$1,000 | ___9=\$12,501 to \$15,000 |
| ___2=\$1,001 to \$2,000 | ___10=\$15,001 to \$20,000 |
| ___3=\$2,001 to \$3,000 | ___11=\$20,001 to \$25,000 |
| ___4=\$3,001 to \$4,000 | ___12=\$25,001 to \$50,000 |
| ___5=\$4,001 to \$5,000 | ___13=\$50,001 to \$75,000 |
| ___6=\$5,001 to \$7,500 | ___14=\$75,001 to \$100,000 |
| ___7=\$7,501 to \$10,000 | ___15=more than \$100,000 |
| ___8=\$10,001 to \$12,500 | |

19) Do you (or does anyone in your family household) have any shares of stock in publicly held corporations, mutual funds, or investment trusts, including in retirement accounts (i.e., IRA or 401k)?

Yes _____ No _____

If you added up all such accounts (for your entire household), about how much would they amount to right now? (Please circle one answer only):

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___1=Less than \$1,000 | ___9=\$12,501 to \$15,000 |
| ___2=\$1,001 to \$2,000 | ___10=\$15,001 to \$20,000 |
| ___3=\$2,001 to \$3,000 | ___11=\$20,001 to \$25,000 |
| ___4=\$3,001 to \$4,000 | ___12=\$25,001 to \$50,000 |
| ___5=\$4,001 to \$5,000 | ___13=\$50,001 to \$75,000 |
| ___6=\$5,001 to \$7,500 | ___14=\$75,001 to \$100,000 |
| ___7=\$7,501 to \$10,000 | ___15=more than \$100,000 |
| ___8=\$10,001 to \$12,500 | |

20) If you added together all of the money from checking, savings, retirement, and any other accounts or investments listed above that you (and anyone living in your household) currently own AND then subtracted any debt you have from that total amount, about how much would you have left? (**DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR MORTGAGE DEBT**) (Please circle one answer only):

- 1**=Less than \$1,000
- 2**=\$1,001 to \$2,000
- 3**=\$2,001 to \$3,000
- 4**=\$3,001 to \$4,000
- 5**=\$4,001 to \$5,000
- 6**=\$5,001 to \$7,500
- 7**=\$7,501 to \$10,000
- 8**=\$10,001 to \$12,500
- 9**=\$12,501 to \$15,000
- 10**=\$15,001 to \$20,000
- 11**=\$20,001 to \$25,000
- 12**=\$25,001 to \$50,000
- 13**=\$50,001 to \$75,000

- 14**=\$75,001 to \$100,000

- 15**=more than \$100,000

APPENDIX C

CODEBOOK

Family Life	
Subcode	Definition
Routines & Activities: Daily Living	
Routines and Activities: Daily Living	Parents describe daily family routines or activities of daily living (e.g., bathing, dressing, travel to work and school) engaged in with their children and other members of their household that occur during a typical day. [This subcode also captures other activities and facets of family life parents describe that occur on a regular, consistent basis and are part of their usual routine. This means descriptions of routines related to enrichment activities, daily meals, technology and media use/exposure, and visits with family and friends may be correctly double-coded in this category as well as the more discrete categories.]
Routines & Activities: Meals	
Routines and Activities: Meals	Parents describe their daily family routines regarding mealtimes with their children that occur during a typical day.
Routines & Activities: Technology & Media	
Routines and Activities: Technology & Media	Parents discuss their children's use of television, electronic tablets (e.g., iPads), smart phones, and PCs during a typical day.
Routines & Activities: Visits with Friends and Family	
Routines and Activities: Visits with Friends and Family	Parents describe visits with family friends, neighbors, and/or extended family and playdates with their child's friends and classmates that occur during a typical day.
Routines & Activities: Religion	
Routines and Activities: Religious Observance	Parents discuss/describe their family's and child's participation in organized religious activities/ceremonies (e.g., attending church, synagogue, temple, religion lessons, Sunday school, nightly prayers, etc.) and/or refer to the importance of religion in their lives. [IF PARTICIPANTS REFER SPECIFICALLY TO ENGAGING IN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES/CEREMONIES WHILE GROWING UP/DURING THEIR CHILDHOODS, DO NOT CODE IN THIS CATEGORY. CODE THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER INTERGENERATIONAL ROUTINES & ACTIVITIES]

Routines & Activities: Enrichment and Investments	
<i>Home-Based</i>	
Routines and Activities: Literacy and Language [Home-Based]	Parents discuss/describe activities related to language and literacy in the home (e.g., reading books, telling stories, identifying letters, practicing the alphabet, practicing phonics skills, writing letters and words, practicing or exposure to foreign language skills). Code ALL activities that involve books, reading, and writing even if the subject matter relates to another enrichment category (e.g., science, nature, animals, etc.).
Routines and Activities: Math, Spatial, and Logical Reasoning [Home-Based]	Parents discuss/describe activities related to the development of math, spatial, and logical reasoning skills in the home (e.g., counting, identifying numbers and shapes, playing board games, playing with puzzles, cooking, measuring, classifying, comparing, or sorting items based on size, shape, color, etc., estimating distance, using building blocks and construction toys, such as Legos, and practicing math problem-solving skills, such as simple addition and subtraction).
Routines and Activities: Arts, Crafts, Culture, and Leisure [Home-Based]	Parents discuss/describe arts, cultural, and leisure activities that occur in the home (e.g., drawing, painting, using coloring books, engaging in arts and crafts, listening to music, playing musical instruments, and dancing). Exclude references to literacy-related activities and tools (e.g., if parents say they read books about music or art/artists to children.)
Routines and Activities: Nature and Science [Home-Based]	Parents discuss/describe activities that expose children to nature (e.g., playing games in the yard, collecting plants, flowers, or leaves, gardening, bird watching) or science-related activities (e.g., conducting simple "experiments" like seeing what happens when baking soda and vinegar are mixed together, discussing and testing what happens when water is put in the freezer, owning an ant farm, using magnets, taking apart a mechanical device and putting it back together, discussing science concepts, including differences between types of animals, what causes plants to grow, what causes changes in the weather or temperature, space/cosmology, etc.) at or very near the home. Exclude references to literacy-related activities and tools (e.g., if parents say they read books about or featuring animals and natural phenomena.)

<p>Routines and Activities: Informal Athletics and Sports [Home- Based]</p>	<p>Parents discuss/describe activities that involve participation in informal athletics and sports activities in the home, in the yard, or in an adjacent area. Include references to running in the yard, jumping, swimming in a backyard pool, including a kiddie pool, home-based exercise, jumping rope, playing catch, and playing hide and go seek or tag, playing on a backyard playset, swing set, or gym set. Exclude references to watching athletic or sports events on television, which should be coded under "Technology and Media." Also EXCLUDE any references to ORGANIZED team sports and athletics, such as club soccer, tennis lessons, Little League baseball, gymnastics and tumbling.</p>
<p>Routines & Activities: Enrichment</p>	
<p><i>Community-Based</i></p>	
<p>Routines and Activities: Literacy and Language [Community- Based]</p>	<p>Parents discuss/describe activities related to language and literacy outside the home (e.g., visiting the library, participating in story time at library or other venues, identifying letters on or reading street signs or labels in the grocery store, foreign language classes/lessons). Code ALL activities that involve books, reading, and writing even if the subject matter relates to another enrichment category (e.g., science, nature, animals, etc.).</p>
<p>Routines and Activities: Math, Spatial, and Logical Reasoning [Community-Based]</p>	<p>Parents discuss/describe activities related to the development of math, spatial, and logical reasoning skills outside the home (e.g., practice using/counting money at the store, identifying prices at the grocery store, identifying numbers on street signs, identifying shapes of street signs and other items, estimating distances while traveling).</p>
<p>Routines and Activities: Arts, Crafts, Culture, and Leisure [Community-Based]</p>	<p>Parents discuss/describe arts, cultural, and leisure activities that occur outside the home (e.g., trips to museums, Science Center, arts events, music concerts, including pop, rock, classical, etc., plays, musicals, and other live theatre, movies/cinema, and visits to amusement parks). Exclude references to literacy-related activities and tools (e.g., if parents say they read books about music or art/artists to children.)</p>

<p>Routines and Activities: Nature and Science [Community-Based]</p>	<p>Parents discuss/describe activities that expose children to nature (including animals) and science-related activities outside the home and in the larger community (e.g., visits to the park, the Aviary, the zoo, the circus, visits to the beach and swimming in oceans, lakes, and ponds, hiking). Exclude references to literacy-related activities and tools (e.g., if parents say they read books about or featuring animals and natural phenomena.)</p>
<p>Routines and Activities: Informal Athletics and Sports [Community-Based]</p>	<p>Parents discuss/describe activities that involve participation in informal athletics and sports activities in the community. Include references to swimming at local pools, riding bikes with parents or friends, and playing sports with family and/or friends. EXCLUDE any references to ORGANIZED team sports and athletics, such as club soccer, tennis lessons, Little League baseball, gymnastics and tumbling.</p>
<p>Routines and Activities: Organized Extracurricular Activities [Community-Based]</p>	<p>Parents discuss/describe ORGANIZED recreational, educational, cultural, arts, and sports activities their children participate in outside the home (e.g., swimming lessons, dance lessons, music lessons, sports teams, Boys/Girls Scouts, language/math lessons or tutoring). [Anything related to daycare, childcare, or pre-k should not be coded in this category.]</p>
<p>Routines & Activities: Enrichment and Investments</p>	
<p><i>Life Skills</i></p>	
<p>Routines and Activities: Life Skills</p>	<p>Parents discuss/describe what they do to cultivate/promote their children's behavioral, social, and self-maintenance skills. Behavioral skills include self-regulation, self-control, and learning-related behaviors (attention, independence, task completion, and eagerness to learn). Social skills include the ability to make friends, share, take turns, and provide comfort. Self-maintenance/self-help skills include maintaining hygiene, engaging in independent toileting ("being potty-trained"), doing simple chores, knowing, writing, and/or spelling one's name, a parent's name, and the family's address, and displaying age-appropriate independence in general.</p>

Family SES, Structure, & Resources

Subcode	Definition
SES/Social Class	Parents discuss their individual or their family socioeconomic status/social class (including references to their own or their spouse/partner's schooling level, income, and assets).
Relationship/Marital Status	Parents indicate whether they are married, single, divorced, widowed, or cohabiting. They also provide details about their partnerships (e.g., quality and length) or discuss why their partnerships dissolved.
Non-resident Parents	Parents discuss or describe their child(ren)'s non-resident parent, including whether the non-resident parent is involved in the child's life, pays child support, as well as how regularly/often the non-resident parent sees the child and what the quality of the relationship between the child and this parent is.
Siblings/Other Children	Parents discuss their other children/their child(ren)'s siblings and describe their specific experiences with their other children as well as the interactions/relationships between the focal child and his/her siblings.

Neighborhood

Subcode	Definition
Spatial: Neighborhood/Community [Location]	Parents indicate which neighborhood/community they live in.
Spatial: Neighborhood/Community [Social Class/SES]	Parents characterize the socioeconomic status of the neighborhoods/communities they reside in, indicating whether it is poor/low-income, working-class/blue collar, middle-class, or affluent as well as describing/discussing how socioeconomically diverse it is.
Spatial: Neighborhood/Community [Racial/Ethnic Composition]	Parents discuss the racial/ethnic composition of their neighborhoods. Parents explicitly described the racial-make up of their communities (e.g., it's majority African American or White) and/or discuss whether their neighborhoods are OR are NOT diverse.)
Spatial: Neighborhood/Community [Resources]	Parents discuss which amenities and resources (e.g., schools and child care centers, libraries, playgrounds, swimming pools, parks, grocery stores/supermarkets, and civic organizations) their immediate neighborhoods/communities possess OR do NOT possess.) Include parents' positive or negative perceptions of how plentiful (or not) and/or well-maintained their neighborhoods' resources are.

<p style="text-align: center;">Spatial: Neighborhood/Community [Safety]</p>	<p>Parents discuss whether their neighborhoods are safe, dangerous, or crime-ridden. [CODE RESPONSES HERE THAT SPECIFICALLY REFLECT PARENTS' (OR ANY REASONABLE PERSON'S) FEAR OF POSSIBLE PHYSICAL HARM, FOR EXAMPLE, OPEN-AIR DRUG DEALING AND VIOLENT CRIME AS WELL AS ANY CONCERNS ABOUT HEAVY OR SPEEDING TRAFFIC OR HOW A LACK OF SIDEWALKS INCREASES THEIR FEARS OF LETTING CHILDREN WALK AROUND UNACCOMPANIED OUTSIDE] Include parents' positive or negative perceptions of how safe their communities are.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Spatial: Neighborhood/Community [Order and Cohesion]</p>	<p>Parents discuss whether their neighborhoods are well-ordered and/or socially-cohesive. They described whether their communities are clean or strewn with litter and trash, quiet or noisy, and crowded or sparsely populated. Parents also discuss whether they (and/or their children) have close, friendly, or distant relationships with neighbors, can count on neighbors for help or have helped neighbors in the past, view their community as tight-knit or as a place where few people socialize with each other and tend to keep to themselves. Parents indicate whether there are many or few families with children and/or whether there are many or few peers for their own children to play with. [CODE RESPONSES IN THIS CATEGORY THAT REFLECT ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS (INDICATORS OF ORDER OR CHAOS), SUCH AS VACANT LOTS, ABANDONED BUILDINGS, GRAFFITI, AND VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF PROPERTY CRIME. ALSO CODE RESPONSES IN THIS CATEGORY THAT REFLECT POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL, FOR EXAMPLE, CARING, FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS, LACK OF COMFORT OR CONFLICT WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS, HIGH LEVELS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG NEIGHBORS, ACCESS TO POSITIVE ROLE MODELS AND AGE-APPROPRIATE PEERS.] Include parents' positive or negative perceptions of how well-ordered and cohesive, friendly, or isolated their neighborhoods are.</p>

Early Care & Education (ECE)	
Subcode	Definition
ECE Type	
<p style="text-align: center;">ECE Type: Center-Based</p>	<p>Parents indicate that their child attends some formal, center-based childcare or preschool program or center, including Head Start, private programs, and public preschools.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ECE Type: Home-Based Daycare Program or Care Provided by a Relative and Friend</p>	<p>Parents indicate that their child attends a formal childcare or preschool program located in a private home. Parents indicate that their child does not attend a formal childcare or pre-K program and receives care from family (not including parent care) or friends (either paid or unpaid).</p>

ECE Type: Parent Care	Parents indicate that they provide care to their child on a full-time basis and that their child does not attend a childcare or pre-K program.
ECE: Characteristics	Parent describes the childcare setting, including the <i>number of children, teachers, and other staff, teacher- student ratio, its curriculum, types of routines and activities taking place in the setting, and its location.</i>
ECE: Parental Beliefs and Preferences	
ECE: Parental Preferences	Parents explain why they chose a particular childcare setting or program and what they do and do not like about their child's program. [CODE RESPONSES IN THIS CATEGORY THAT ADDRESS WHAT ATTRACTED PARENTS TO A PARTICULAR CENTER OR WHAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR IN A CENTER, INCLUDING PROXIMITY TO HOME OR WORK, COST, CURRICULUM, ETC.]
ECE: Parental Beliefs about Effects on Child Development	Parents explain how they think their child's childcare center or preschool program is promoting their child's development, including social skills, behavioral skills, self-maintenance and practical skills, and academic skills. [CODE RESPONSES IN THIS CATEGORY THAT ADDRESS HOW PARENTS BELIEVE THEIR CHILDREN'S ECE PROGRAM IS HELPING THEM GET READY FOR KINDERGARTEN; ALSO CODE ANY RESPONSES WHEREIN PARENTS DISCUSS OR IDENTIFY OTHER WAYS THAT THE PROGRAM IS IMPROVING THEIR CHILD'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES, INCLUDING LANGUAGE, SOCIAL, MATH, BEHAVIORAL, ATTENTION, MOTIVATION TO LEARN, INTEREST IN SCHOOL, INDEPENDENCE, AND SELF- REGULATION.]
Parental Beliefs about Kindergarten Readiness	
Subcode	Definition
Important Skills	
Academic	alphabet, count, etc.
Social/behavioral	sit still, take turns, etc.

Practical information & Self-maintenance	memorize address, phone number, tie shoes, wash hands, get dressed, etc.
Other	other considerations
Why Skills Are Important	
Why are specific skills important	parents explain why named skills are important for kindergarten
Work Life	
Subcode	Definition
Employment Status	Parents indicate whether or not they work for pay outside of the home.
Occupational Status	Parents describe the type of work they perform. If the parent does not work outside of the home, they discuss the type of jobs they've held in the past or discuss any type of formal schooling they are currently completing.
Occupation: Preferences	Parents describe what attracted them to their current or past occupations.
Occupation: Aspirations	Parents discuss what their past, present, and/or future occupational goals and aspirations are. This includes references to what jobs/careers they hope to pursue after completing schooling, return to work full-time after having left the workforce to stay home with their children.
Workplace Flexibility	Parents explain to what degree their workplace affords them the necessary flexibility to meet their work and family responsibilities (this includes both negative and positive perceptions). If the parent no longer works outside of the home but discusses whether their former workplaces were flexible or offered adequate accommodations, use this code.
Stressors	
Subcode	Definition
Stressors: Balancing Responsibilities and Finding Time	Parents describe the stressors they encounter when it comes to family life and specifically mention the challenge of balancing their work and family duties successfully. Parents may also describe the stressors they encounter when it comes to family life and specifically mention feeling too busy or not having enough time to spend with spouses/partners or children.

Stressors: Money/Finances	Parents describe the stressors they encounter when it comes to family life and specifically mention money or finances.
Stressors: Other	Parents describe the stressors they encounter when it comes to family life and refer to some issue other than work-life balance, money/finances, or finding time.
Family & Social Background	
Subcode	Definition
Intergenerational: Family Structure	Parents describe the type of families they were raised in, including whether their parents were married or whether they were raised by a single parent, whether they had siblings or were an only child, whether they lived within a nuclear family (i.e., mother, father, and children) or an extended/multigenerational family (family home included grandparents, aunts, uncles, and/or cousins).
Intergenerational: Social Class	Parents describe their family's socioeconomic status when they were growing up, including any discussion of their parents' level of education and occupational status (i.e., any indication of whether their parents worked and what they did for a living), any discussion of whether their parents/families ever struggled financially or were financially stable/comfortable.
Intergenerational: Family Climate	Parents discuss their family relationships during childhood and adolescence, including descriptions of their parents' parenting style, the quality of their parents' spousal/romantic relationships, the quality of their individual and their siblings' relationships with their parents, and the quality of their relationships with siblings and other family members during childhood and adolescence.
Intergenerational: Routines & Activities	Parents discuss their past experiences growing up, including how often they participated in a range of enrichment, cultural, leisure activities and family routines and rituals (e.g., holiday celebrations, religious observance and church attendance, family gathering/reunions).
Intergenerational: Parenting Lessons Gleaned	Parents discuss what they believe they learned from how they were raised, including discussions of those practices they wish to emulate and those practices they won't emulate/employ in raising their own children. [IF PARENTS DESCRIBE WHAT THEY LEARNED FROM THEIR OWN PARENTS BUT DO NOT CONNECT OR LINK THAT LESSON TO HOW THEY RAISE THEIR OWN CHILDREN, DO NOT CODE IT IN THIS CATEGORY.]
Intergenerational: Neighborhood/Community [Location]	Parents describe where they grew up, including identifying the city and/or neighborhood and indicating whether it was urban, rural, or suburban.
Intergenerational: Neighborhood/Community [Social Class/SES]	Parents characterize the socioeconomic status of the neighborhoods/communities they grew up in, indicating whether it was poor/low-income, working-class/blue collar, middle-class, or affluent. They also describe/discuss how socioeconomically diverse the communities they grew up in were.
Intergenerational: Neighborhood/Community [Racial/Ethnic Composition]	Parents discuss the racial/ethnic composition of the neighborhoods they grew up in. Parents explicitly describe the racial-make up of their childhood communities (e.g., it was majority African American or White) and/or discuss whether their childhood neighborhoods were OR were NOT diverse.)

Intergenerational: Neighborhood/Community [Resources]	Parents discuss which amenities and resources (e.g., schools and child care centers, libraries, playgrounds, swimming pools, parks, grocery stores/supermarkets, and civic organizations) their childhood neighborhoods/communities possessed OR did NOT possess.) Include parents' positive or negative perceptions of how plentiful (or not) and/or well-maintained their neighborhoods' resources were when they were growing up.
Intergenerational: Neighborhood/Community [Safety]	Parents discuss whether their childhood neighborhoods were safe, dangerous, or crime-ridden. [CODE RESPONSES HERE THAT SPECIFICALLY REFLECT PARENTS' (OR ANY REASONABLE PERSON'S) FEAR OF POSSIBLE PHYSICAL HARM, FOR EXAMPLE, OPEN-AIR DRUG DEALING AND VIOLENT CRIME AS WELL AS ANY CONCERNS THAT RELATED TO SAFETY FROM THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE.] Include parents' positive or negative perceptions of how safe their communities were when they were growing up.
Intergenerational: Neighborhood/Community [Order and Cohesion]	Parents discuss whether the neighborhoods they grew up in were well-ordered and/or socially-cohesive. They describe whether their childhood communities were clean or strewn with litter and trash, quiet or noisy, and crowded or sparsely populated. Parents also discuss whether they (and/or their families) had close, friendly, or distant relationships with neighbors during their childhood and adolescence, whether they or their families could count on neighbors for help or had helped neighbors in the past, viewed their childhood community as tight-knit or as a place where few people socialized with each other and tended to keep to themselves. [CODE RESPONSES IN THIS CATEGORY THAT REFLECT ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS (INDICATORS OF ORDER OR CHAOS), SUCH AS VACANT LOTS, ABANDONED BUILDINGS, GRAFFITI, AND VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF PROPERTY CRIME. ALSO CODE RESPONSES IN THIS CATEGORY THAT REFLECT POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL, FOR EXAMPLE, CARING, FRIENDLY NEIGHBORS, HIGH LEVELS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG NEIGHBORS, LACK OF COMFORT OR CONFLICT WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS ACCESS TO POSITIVE ROLE MODELS AND AGE-APPROPRIATE PEERS.] Include parents' positive or negative perceptions of how well-ordered and cohesive, friendly, or isolated their neighborhoods were when they were growing up.
Intergenerational: School Context	Parents describe what their schooling experiences were in childhood and adolescence, including basic descriptions of where they attended school, what type of school(s) they attended (e.g., public, private secular, Catholic) their schools as well as their positive and/or negative perceptions of their school contexts.

Social Networks

Subcode	Definition
Relational: Kin Networks [Composition]	Parents describe the individuals who comprise their extended families, indicating whether they have large or small extended families (including grandparents, parents, siblings, aunts/uncles, cousins, etc.).
Relational: Kin Networks [Proximity]	Parents indicate whether they live near (in the same city or community) or far (in different cities or states) from their extended families.
Relational: Kin Networks [Social Class]	Parents describe (in general terms) the socioeconomic status of members of their extended families (including descriptions of their educational attainment, income level, employment & occupational status, and assets).

Relational: Peer Networks [Composition]	Parents describe who their friends and acquaintances are as well as their characteristics (single men or women, men or women with families, coworkers, people they grew up with).
Relational: Peer Networks [Proximity]	Parents indicate whether they live near (in the same city or community) or far (in different cities or states) from their friends/acquaintances.
Relational: Peer Networks [Social Class]	Parents describe (in general terms) the socioeconomic status of their friends/acquaintances (including descriptions of their educational attainment, income level, and occupational status).
Relational: Emotional Support	Parents discuss whom they turn to for emotional support (whether friends or family members) and provide examples of times when friends and families have provided emotional support.
Relational: Instrumental Support [Financial]	Parent discuss to whom they would or have turned for financial assistance in adulthood. They also describe instances when they have received financial help from family and friends (e.g., help from parents with educational costs/loans, down payments for housing, clothing and gifts).
Relational: Instrumental Support [Non-Financial Practical]	Parent discuss to whom they would or have turned for other types of practical assistance in adulthood, such as babysitting, childrearing advice, job leads or advice related to education, employment, or communities.

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