

# The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health

Maria Trent, MD, MPH

Bloomberg Professor of American Health, Pediatrics, & Nursing

Division of Adolescent/Young Adult Medicine

Johns Hopkins University



# Disclosures

## Funding/Research Support through JHU

- National Institutes of Health
- Thomas Wilson Foundation for the Children of Baltimore City
- Hologic, Inc.
- Speedx, Ltd.

## Scientific Advisor

- Church & Dwight: Trojan Sexual Health Advisory Council

I have no financial disclosures related to this presentation

# Objectives

- Describe the levels of racism and the re-emergence of racism as a key determinant of health
- Discuss the potential impacts of discrimination on children and families
- Incorporate cultural competency, a raising resisters approach to anticipatory guidance, and scientific innovation as key strategies for reducing health disparities

# Premise



Children and adolescents are the message we send to a time we cannot see. (Postman, 1982) We need to act swiftly to ensure that the message we send is a decisive one. (Graham, 2009)



Photo by [Emily Corley](#) on [Unsplash](#)



*“I believe so many people view forgiveness as letting the other person off the hook,” he says. “We think that we're letting the other person off the hook by forgiving when in actuality we're just freeing [ourselves] from that constant feeling of revenge.”*

-Chris Singleton (Mother Sharonda Singleton killed in Emmanuel Shooting, Charleston SC)

Source/Image:

<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/02/27/south-carolina-ame-church-shooting>

## Gullah Geechee: Descendants of slaves fight for their land

By **Brian Wheeler**  
BBC News, Washington DC

🕒 05 December 2016 | Magazine



**Descendants of West African slaves in South Carolina are fighting to prevent their land from being confiscated and auctioned. Can they save a traditional way of life that has...**



# 'Southern Charm' Episodes Temporarily Taken Down Due to Racial Sensitivities (EXCLUSIVE)

By Kate Aurthur ▾



Tommy Garcia/Bravo



“

The United States is projected to become more racially and ethnically diverse in the coming years.

”

---

US Census



from  
**2017**

**The  
Guardian**

<https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/datablog/2017/jul/17/which-countries-most-and-least-committed-to-reducing-inequality-oxfam-dfi>



Talent is equally distributed,  
opportunity is not.”  
-Leila Janah

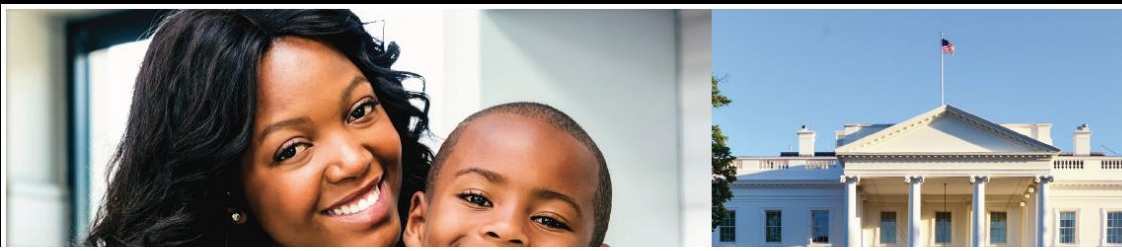
[https://www.inc.com/inc-live/leila-janah-is-on-a-mission-to-fight-global-poverty-with-technology.html?cid=search\\_](https://www.inc.com/inc-live/leila-janah-is-on-a-mission-to-fight-global-poverty-with-technology.html?cid=search_)  
<https://www.futurity.org/gifted-kids-advanced-education-programs-2130842/>  
Photo by [Michael Mims](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Every Generation has to make a dent in the wall of injustice.

–Dr. Mary Frances Berry



Photo by [Steven Libralon](#) on [Unsplash](#)



*Blueprint for Children: Policy Agenda*

## LEADING NATION

### GOALS FOR A LEADING NATION

The 45th president must safeguard the nation's position as a global leader for children. The next administration must ensure that the United States:

- promotes biomedical, public health, and health services research to help children grow into healthy adults,
- develops innovative new therapies for pediatric diseases,
- guides global efforts to address non-communicable diseases in children,
- aggressively addresses climate change,
- addresses factors that make some children more vulnerable than others, such as race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity, and disability, and
- reforms our broken immigration system.





**-EMBARGO-**

PS#16125  
CLEAN: 3/22/1

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS**

Maria Trent, MD, MPH, FAAP, FSAHM,<sup>a</sup> Danielle G. Dooley, MD, MPhil, FAAP,<sup>b</sup> Jacqueline Dougé, MD, MPH, FAAP,<sup>c</sup> and the Section on Adolescent Health, Council on Community Pediatrics, and Committee on Adolescence

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Organizational Principles to Guide and Define the Child Health Care System and/or Improve the Health of all Children

**The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health**





- **“We must dismantle racism at every level, from individual to institutional to systemic.** Our nation did not get here overnight, and the road to progress and healing will be long and difficult, but the work we have before us is essential. Our children’s future will be built on these moments of reckoning.
  - *AAP President Sara “Sally” Goza, M.D., FAAP*



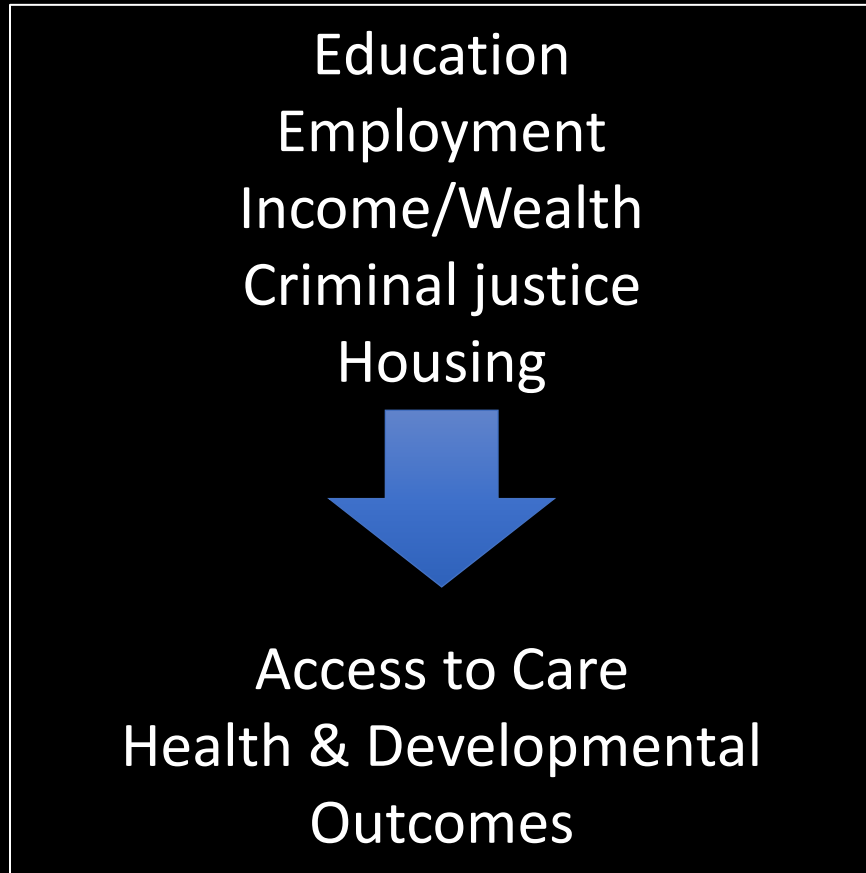
- “The mission of the AAP cannot be accomplished when structural racism deprives too many children of a fair chance and an equitable future. Out of our grief and anger, we can strive to recommit to the AAP mission and follow it where it leads. **We have always taken on complex threats to children’s health, and we don’t flinch from this one.”**
  - *AAP CEO/Executive Vice President Mark Del Monte, J.D.*

**Racism harms the health** of children, teens and families





# Race is a Social Construct



Blank, S, et.al. Measuring Racial Discrimination,  
National Academies Press,  
2004, <http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309091268>  
1/11/2021

Year	Racial Categories in the US Census 1790-2000 (Selected Years)
1790	Free Whites, Other Free Persons, Slaves
1800-1810	Free Whites, Other Free Persons, except Indians not taxed; and Slaves
1850	White, Black, Mulatto, and Indian
1890	White, Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon, Chinese, Japanese, and Indian
1950	White, Negro, Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Other races spell out,
1970	White, Negro or black, Indian (American), Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Korean, Other (print race)
2000	White, Black, African American, or Negro; Eskimo, Aleut, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Asian Indian, Samoan, Guamanian, Other Asian Pacific Islander, Other Race

*“Race’ and ‘ethnicity’ are poorly defined terms that served as flawed surrogates for multiple environmental and genetic factors in disease causation , including ancestral geography, origins, socioeconomic status, education, and access to care. Research must move beyond these weak and imperfect proxy relationships to define the more proximate factors that influence health.”*

Frances Collins, MD, PhD  
Principal Investigator, Human Genome Project  
Director, National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, United States

# Levels of Racism (...really any 'ism')

- Institutional (Structural)
- Personally mediated
- Internalized





Janson GR, Hazler RJ. Trauma reactions of bystanders and victims to repetitive abuse experiences. *Violence Vict.* 2004;19(2):239-255. Photo by [Nathan Dumlao](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# How Does it Work in Children?



Jane Elliott, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/class-divided/>

# What Can Pediatricians Do?

- Optimize Clinical Practice
- Optimize Workforce Development and Professional Education
- Optimize Systems Through Community Engagement, Advocacy, and Public Policy
- Optimize Research



# Optimizing Clinical Practice

- Create a culturally-safe medical home, where the providers acknowledge and are sensitive to the racism that children and families experience
- Train clinical and office staff in culturally-competent care
- Evaluate health care quality to assess performance on key areas of disparities



# Identify our Blind Spots



*“Not all of the racial difference in risk is explained by poverty... The stresses of living and working in a world where you are continually demeaned in small ways and large has an effect on the body.”*

# Prepare to Talk About It: Raising Resister Strategy

- Read it
- Name it
- Oppose it
- Replace it



*Janie Ward, the Skin We're In, 2002*

# Bright Futures

FOURTH EDITION

Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents



American Academy of Pediatrics  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



# Reach Out & Read®



# Optimizing Workforce Development and Professional Education

- Advocate for policies and programs designed to address implicit biases and improve health care quality that include:
  - Diversifying the child and adolescent health workforce
  - Providing ongoing professional education

# Train the Next Generation to Be and Do Better



162.129.231.56/video/ViewVideo.aspx?token=d1d46fe7-b39e-4cc6-aa28-be920c587dc3

Fields, Errol  
Alejandra Johnson (Mom - Maria and Dad - Mario) (Improving Cultural Competence in the Pediatric Clinical Setting thru Sim 42914) - 04/29/2014

A video frame showing two people in a clinical setting. One person is sitting at a desk with a computer monitor, and another person is sitting on a chair, looking at a device. The video player interface is visible at the bottom, showing a play button, a progress bar, and a timestamp of 00:00:35.

# Optimizing Systems Through Community Engagement, Advocacy, Public Policy, & Research

- Advocate for improved education policies
- Advocate for alternative strategies for school and community policing
- Advocate for alternative strategies to incarceration for nonviolent youth behavior
- Advocate for improved public health policies for disease control
- Design innovative strategies to mitigate the impacts of racism on children and adolescents

We have to become more powerful on behalf of children (and adolescents).

-Ben Hoffman, MD, FAAP, 2018 AAP ALF

# Acknowledgements

