

The cover features a collage of images of young African American girls. At the top left, a girl with braids smiles broadly. To her right, another girl is focused on reading a book. At the bottom left, a close-up shows a girl looking upwards with a thoughtful expression. On the right side, a girl is seen reading a book. The background is a mix of soft-focus outdoor and indoor school settings.

**Advances in Race and
Ethnicity in Education**
Volume 8

African American Young Girls and Women in PreK12 Schools and Beyond

Informing Research, Policy, and Practice

Edited by
Renae D. Mayes
Marjorie C. Shavers
James L. Moore III

Series Editors
Chance W. Lewis
James L. Moore III

**AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUNG
GIRLS AND WOMEN IN PREK12
SCHOOLS AND BEYOND**

ADVANCES IN RACE AND ETHNICITY IN EDUCATION

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VOLUME 8

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YOUNG GIRLS AND
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Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2022

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78769-532-0 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-78769-531-3 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-78769-597-9 (Epub)

ISSN: 2051-2317 (Series)



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

I have been so fortunate to be loved and supported by so many strong Black women who have come before me. I want to dedicate this edited volume to my beloved mother, Sonya Mayes; sister, Shayla Mayes; maternal granny, Bertha Dunson; paternal grandma, Norlene Mayes; and my maternal aunt, Linda Epps. I am because we are, and I am so grateful for the ways that each of you have poured into my life.

Renae D. Mayes

My work stands on the shoulders of the many Black girls and women who walk beside me and those Black women who have paved the way for me. I would like to dedicate this edited book to my mother, Crystal Giles, who has shaped my path and sparked my love for reading and education from as early as I can remember. I also want to dedicate this book to my late daughter, Madison Evelyn Shavers. Although you were here for only a short time, you inspire me every day.

Marjorie C. Shavers

I dedicate this book to those Black women and young girls who have played a tremendous role in my life development, such as my mother, Edna M. Moore; maternal grandmother, Mable Miller; maternal aunt, Frances Anderson; wife, Stephanie M. Moore; sister, Dr S. Rochelle Sullivan; three daughters, Sienna A. Moore, Savanna M. Moore, and Sannai E. Moore; and mentors, Dr Bevelee A. Watford, Dr Valerie Lee, and Dr Donna Y. Ford.

James L. Moore III

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James L. Moore III, PhD, is the Vice Provost for diversity and inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer at the Ohio State University. He is also the Executive Director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African

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He has over 100 publications including 70+ refereed journal articles in the leading academic journals in the field of urban education. He has received over \$7 million in external research funds. To date, Dr Lewis has authored/coauthored/coedited 28 books: *White Teachers/Diverse Classrooms: A Guide for Building Inclusive Schools, Eliminating Racism and Promoting High Expectations* (Stylus, 2006); *The Dilemmas of Being an African American Male in the New Millennium* (Infinity, 2008); *An Educator's Guide to Working with African American Students: Strategies for Promoting Academic Success* (Infinity, 2009); *Transforming Teacher Education: What Went Wrong with Teacher Training and How We Can Fix It* (Stylus, 2010); *White Teachers/Diverse classrooms: Creating Inclusive schools, Building on Students' Diversity and Providing True Educational Equity* [2nd Ed.] (Stylus, 2011); *Yes We Can!: Improving Urban Schools through Innovative Educational Reform* (Information Age, 2011); *African Americans in Urban Schools: Critical Issues and Solutions for Achievement* (Peter Lang, 2012); *Black Males in Postsecondary Education: Examining their Experiences in Diverse Institutional Contexts* (Information Age, 2012); *Improving Urban Schools: Equity and Access in K-16 STEM Education* (Information Age, 2013); *Black Male Teachers: Diversifying the United States' Teacher Workforce* (Emerald Publishing, 2013); *An Educator's Guide to Working with African American Students: Strategies for Promoting Academic Success* [2nd Edition] (LEC Press, 2013); *African American Male Students in PreK-12 Contexts: Implications for Research, Policy & Practice* (Emerald, 2014); *Teacher Education & Black Communities:*

Implications for Access, Equity and Achievement (Information Age, 2014); *Autoethnography as a Lighthouse: Illuminating Race, Research and the Politics of Schooling* (Information Age, 2015); *Priorities of the Professoriate: Engaging Multiple Forms of Scholarship across Rural and Urban Institutions* (Information Age, 2015); *High School to College Research Studies* (University Press of America, 2015); *Reaching the Mountaintop of the Academy: Personal Narratives, Advice and Strategies from Black Distinguished and Endowed Professors* (Information Age, 2015); *An Educator's Guide to Working with African American Students* [3rd Edition] (LEC Press, 2016); *Black Female Teachers: Diversifying the United States' Teacher Workforce* (Emerald, 2017); *Global Issues and Urban Schools: Strategies to Effectively Teach Students in Urban Educational Environments around the Globe* (Information Age, 2019); *Community College Teacher Preparation for Diverse Geographies* (Information Age, 2019); *The Dilemmas of Being an African American Male in the New Millennium* [2nd Ed.] (LEC Press, 2019); *An Educator's Guide to Working with African American Students: Strategies for Promoting Academic Success* [4th Ed.] (LEC Press, 2019); *Conquering Academia: Transparent Experiences of Diverse Female Doctoral Students* (Information Age, 2019); *Mentoring Strategies for African American Males: Single Mothers Tell their Stories* (LEC Press, 2020); *Reimagining School Discipline for the 21st Century Student: Engaging Students, Practitioners and Community Members* (Information Age, in-press); *Purposeful Teaching and Learning in Diverse Contexts: Implications for Access, Equity and Achievement* (Information Age, in-press) and *Economic, Political and Legal Solutions to Critical Issues in Urban Education and Implications for Teacher Preparation* (Information Age, in-press).

James L. Moore III, PhD, is the Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer at the Ohio State University, while serving as the first Executive Director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male. He is also the inaugural EHE Distinguished Professor of Urban Education in the College of Education and Human Ecology. From 2015 to 2017, Dr Moore served as a program director for Broadening Participation in Engineering in the Engineering Directorate at the National Science Foundation in Arlington, Virginia, and, from 2011 to 2015, he was an associate provost for Diversity and Inclusion at the Ohio State University, where he managed numerous programs and units.

Dr Moore is internationally recognized for his work on African American males. His research agenda focuses on school counseling, gifted education, urban education, higher education, multicultural education/counseling, and STEM education, and he is often quoted, featured, and mentioned in popular publications, such as the *New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Columbus Dispatch*, *Spartanburg Herald*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*. From 2018 to 2021, he was cited by *Education Week* as one of the 200

most influential scholars and researchers in the United States, who inform educational policy, practice, and reform.

Dr Moore has developed a national reputation as a thought leader on important educational public policy topics and regularly invited to share his expertise to various K-12 school systems, universities, professional associations, and governmental and nonprofit agencies. On May 9, 2019, Congressman Anthony Gonzalez (R-OH), Congressman Troy Balderson (R-OH), and staff of the US House Representatives Committee on Science, Space, and Technology invited him to testify at the hearing titled, “Broadening Participation in STEM Education,” in the Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

Dr Moore has coedited and coauthored six books: (1) *African American Students in Urban Schools: Critical Issues and Solutions for Achievement*; (2) *African American Male Students in PreK-12 Schools: Informing Research, Policy, and Practice*; (3) *Black Males and Intercollegiate Athletics: An exploration of Problems and Solutions*; (4) *Advancing Educational Outcomes in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*; (5) *Gifted Children of Color Around the World: Diverse Needs, Exemplary Practices and Directions for the Future*; and (6) *Black Boys Lit: Engaging Gifted and Talented Black Boys Using Multicultural Literature and Ford’s Bloom–Banks Matrix*. He has also published over 160 publications; secured nearly \$30 million in grants, contracts, and gifts; and given over 200 scholarly presentations and lectures throughout the United States and other parts of the world (e.g., Brazil, Bermuda, Bahamas, Jamaica, Canada, England, Spain, China, India, Indonesia, Ireland, and France).

Throughout his career, he has received numerous prestigious awards, honors, and distinctions. Notably, he was selected as an American Educational Research Association Fellow, American Council on Education Fellow, American Counseling Association Fellow, and Big Ten Committee on Institutional Cooperation Academic Leadership Program Fellow. In 2011, he was bestowed a proclamation from the Ohio House [OH]; in 2014, a resolution from the Columbus City Council [OH]; and in 2015, a key to the City of Spartanburg [SC]. Additionally, in 2018, Missy and Bob Weiler of Columbus, Ohio, established in his honor the Dr James L. Moore III Scholars Program to support diverse undergraduate students transferring from Columbus State Community College to the Ohio State University.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Dr Hawkins professional career has been dedicated to working with vulnerable, oppressed, and underserved populations and has been a tireless advocate for children and families, particularly those gripped by poverty and social injustice. In addition to her role as professor at EMU and volunteer service as President for the Ypsilanti Community Schools Board of Education, she further contributes to the community through advocacy and volunteerism in various programs and agencies in Washtenaw County.

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Cierra Kaler-Jones, PhD, is the Director of Storytelling at the Communities for Just Schools Fund. Dr Kaler-Jones received her PhD in minority and urban education in the Department of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership at

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Rena D. Mayes, PhD, NCC, is an Associate Professor in the Counseling Program in the College of Education at the University of Arizona. Her research agenda focuses on the academic success and postsecondary readiness for gifted Black students with dis/abilities and Black girls while providing recommendations for dismantling systems of oppression through policy and practice. As an extension of her work, Dr Mayes has worked with faculty in educational leadership to support the research and training of culturally responsive practices and school and nonschool partnerships among preservice and inservice school counselors and administrators.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank God, without whom none of this would have been possible. I'm grateful for His everlasting love that has guided me into spaces to meet and collaborate with so many people on impactful projects. I would also like to acknowledge my husband, Dr Benjamin Kearl, who has added so much joy, love, and encouragement to my life. I am also grateful for my parents, Alvin and Sonya Mayes, and my siblings, Jay, Shayla, Marcus, and their families for being a constant inspiration in all my endeavors. I would also like to thank Drs Erik M. Hines, Desireé Vega, and Paul C. Harris for being my squad as we navigate academia and life together. This edited volume would not have been possible without the leadership of my coeditors, Drs Marjorie C. Shavers and James L. Moore III. I'm beyond grateful for our collaboration. Finally, I would like to thank the authors for contributing to this volume. Each chapter is beautiful, reflecting the different ways of impacting Black girls and women in their respective communities.

Renaë D. Mayes

I could not do anything without God, so I want to start by acknowledging Him. I also want to acknowledge and thank my husband, Josh, for the consistent joy, love, and support that he provides every day. Further, I am extremely grateful that I have him as a partner in this unpredictable life. I also want to thank my son, Matthew, for his unconditional love and the joy that radiates from him and that always inspires me. Additionally, I want to thank my parents, M. C. Adams Jr. and Crystal Giles, and my brother, Marcus Adams, for laying the initial foundation for my life. To my friends, colleagues, and extended family, thank you for continuing to pour into both my personal and professional life. To my coeditors, Drs Renaë D. Mayes and James L. Moore III, thank you for your collaboration and friendship. It is an honor to work with the two of you. Finally, I would like to thank the authors who contributed to this volume. Thank you for your words, your nuggets of wisdom, and your dedication to Black girls and women. I feel extremely blessed to be a part of such an important work.

Marjorie C. Shavers

I could not have completed this edited volume without the help, support, and inspiration of others. First, I take this opportunity to acknowledge my beloved wife, Stephanie, and four kids, James IV, Sienna, Savanna, and Sannai, for extending me the needed space and time to devote to completing this edited volume. With the many professional and personal things that I must juggle, your support gave me the motivation to get this edited volume to the finish line.

Second, I want to acknowledge my brother, Marcus T. Moore, and sister, Dr S. Rochelle Sullivan, for their steadfast encouragement and tireless support throughout my life. Third, I want to extend a hearty thanks to my close friends, colleagues, students (current and former), and staff, such as Barbara Carter, Grace Johnson, and Deloris Bosley. Fourth, I want to recognize and thank Dr Robert “Bob” Weiler and his late lovely wife, Missy, for their unwavering support and for embracing me as an honorary member of their family. Fifth, I want to recognize my two coeditors and former doctoral students, Drs Renae D. Mayes and Marjorie C. Shavers, for allowing me to work with them on this very important edited volume. Sixth, I want to thank the authors for contributing to this edited volume, and thank the Emerald Press team for including this important book in its portfolio of published works. Finally, yet most importantly, I want to thank my Creator for always extending me opportunities to both contribute and advance my dreams and aspirations.

James L. Moore III

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK

Renae D. Mayes, Marjorie C. Shavers
and James L. Moore III

The seminal court case, *State of Florida v. George Zimmerman*, was both controversial and polarizing along racial, ethnic, and political lines. On July 13, 2013, George Zimmerman was acquitted of all charges of the tragic death of Trayvon Martin. Both infuriated and distressed by the verdict, Alicia Garza of Oakland, California, posted a social media message on her Facebook page containing the hashtag, “#BlackLivesMatter.” Her post became the impetus of the Black Lives Matter movement. The #BlacksLivesMatter hashtag emerged as a widespread social media emblem used to draw attention to present-day experiences of bigotry, racism, and discrimination encountered by Blacks.

During the summer of 2020, the Black community encountered numerous other high-profiled, tragic deaths at the hands of the police. Black Americans, such as George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Tony McDade, are some of the many victims. Spurred by the Black Lives Movement, prominent concerns and treatment of law enforcement stirred major civil unrest, large-scale protests, and national conversations on police reform. It is perhaps too soon to determine whether the conversations may yield positive results. Thus, it is important that the conversations are happening, but a common theme of the discussions underscores the racial bias in policing and other social institutions in US society, especially related to Black men and young boys (Jackson & Moore, 2006, 2008; Moore, Hines, & Harris, 2021; Schwartz, 2020).

What is frequently omitted or ignored among the public discourse are the significant challenges experienced by Black women and young girls. Popular and scientific literature is replete with coverage of Black men and young boys, and the coverage is lacking regarding Black women and young girls. Unfortunately, because of the lack of coverage, many American thought leaders, policy makers, and practitioners are not fully aware of salient societal obstacles that both adversely and commonly affect the improvement of Black women and young girls. For example, Patton, Crenshaw, Haynes, and Watson (2016) noted that “rates of police brutality, state surveillance, and predatory enforcement of

regulatory laws are deployed disproportionately” against Black girls and women as well as Black boys and men (p. 194). Yet, coverage and attention on Black women and young girls is often either overlooked or minimized. This is evident in Crenshaw’s past Ted Talk (2016), where she asked audience members to stand and remain standing when she shared names of Black men and women who have been the target of police brutality. As Crenshaw shared names, first beginning with Black men and young boys and concluding with names of Black women and young girls, more and more audience members began sitting down. At the end of the exercise, only four audience members remained standing out of a full auditorium.

Crenshaw’s brief exercise with the audience illustrates how the social realities of Black women and young girls are unknown. Due to the lack of awareness of their realities, the use of #SayHerName and #BlackLivesMatter hashtags emerged as combined social media handles to bring attention to the violence that Black women and young girls encounter daily. Thus, it is worth noting that the intersection of racism and sexism seems to be a major facet of the lives of Black women and young girls. In fact, these intersections are all too common across multiple sectors for Black women and young girls. Invisibility, among Black women and young girls, is often juxtaposed with the hypervisibility or “state of emergency” discourse concerning Black men and young boys (Patton et al., 2016). As such, it seems like a limiting focus of one aspect of Blackness. General understandings of Blacks are often grounded in ways that relates to Black men and young boys while omitting the social experiences of Black women and young girls. However, as the editors of this volume, we believe that education researchers, scholars, policy makers, and practitioners should embrace intersectional approaches in which all social dimensions of Black women and Black men are captured, meaning that we need to work to understand all facets of life and focus our efforts on dismantling systemic barriers to life while celebrating their wholeness and humanness (Love, 2019). Further, an important facet of Black women and young girls is to determine the role (or lack of) of education in their life. It is often noted that education is important due to its relation to future economic opportunities, civic engagement, and overall health (College Board, 2019). Yet, while Black women and young girls are graduating from high school and pursuing postsecondary educational opportunities at higher rates, we understand that successes are not without psychological, emotional, and sociological challenges. More research is needed to better understand the systemic educational barriers that lead to disparate outcomes for Black women and young girls (Patton et al., 2016). Regarding PreK–12 schooling, Black girls experience school discipline at greater rates than other girl peers (Hines-Datiri & Andrews, 2017; Love, 2019; Morris & Perry, 2017). Discipline disproportionality is frequently associated with how educators, school counselors, and administrators perceive Black girls as disruptive and aggressive. As such, these education professionals may perceive Black girls’ school engagement in the learning environment negatively and push them out of educational opportunities as a whole (Epstein, Blake, & Gonzalez, 2017; Hines-Datiri & Andrews, 2017; Mayes, Lowery, Mims, & Rodman, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017). Within the school

environment, there is often a level of educator bias that facilitates age compression, in which Black girls are viewed as physically more mature, older, and adult-like. Toward this end, Black girls are frequently forced to navigate school on their own because they are perceived as not needing support (Epstein, Blake, & González, 2017; Mayes et al., 2021; Morris, 2016).

As practitioners, policy makers, scholars, and advocates, it is critical that we ask ourselves what this means for the educational success for Black women and young girls and what actions are needed to change the negative conjectures and perceptions of Black women and young girls. This edited volume focuses specifically on Black women and young girls, which we believe fills a major void in popular and scientific literature. Within each chapter, readers are able to glean important information about the challenges that Black women and young girls endure at every continuum of education and beyond. Each chapter also provides a holistic perspective to understanding the plight of Black women and young girls and offers specific recommendations to improving the educational experiences and outcomes for Black women and young girls. Accordingly, the edited volume has been written for a cross-sectional audience (i.e., educational practitioners, researchers, policy makers, advocates, and others), who have a vested interest in the success of Black women and young girls. Each chapter deepens readers' collective understanding of Black women and young girls, while dispelling myths and stereotypes about them.

The edited volume is structured into two general sections: PreK–12 education and higher education. These sections are meant to help us distinguish settings by development, while allowing for connections to be made across settings. In the first section, the contributing authors focused on early childhood, elementary, and secondary experiences of Black girls. More specifically, in Chapter 1, coauthors Iruka and Hawkins focused specifically on the academic, socioemotional, and health development of early childhood Black girls and discussed the ways early development may influence multiple systems of educational growth and the different ways in which educational stakeholders can work together to address the various systems. Furthermore, the chapter examined the impact of these systems on preschool Black girls, with an emphasis on the intersectionality of race and gender. In Chapter 2, coauthors Mims, Kaler-Jones, Kayser, and Johns presented numerous anecdotes to illustrate potential growth-promoting opportunities for Black girls in early childhood educational contexts. Stated differently, this chapter offered specific examples and recommendations in creating learning environments for Black girls may thrive, while enhancing their developing social, emotional, regulatory, and moral capacities. In Chapter 3, coauthors Miranda, Alhassan, and Myrtill concentrated on the identity construction of Black adolescent girls and their relationships with peers. They pinpointed the contextual factors that influence the “relational aggression” among Black adolescent girls and made the case in using sisterhood networks as a bridge to provide support and promote wellness and healthy identity development. In Chapter 4, Patterson presented recounts and narratives of Black-White biracial girls as a way to better understand some of their lived experiences. Stated differently, she used these narratives to illustrate how young, biracial girls often

navigate the intersections of Blackness and Whiteness in their schooling spaces. In Chapter 5, coauthors Ferguson and Shaw presented the unique schooling experiences of Black girl student athletes including racialized and gendered experiences and their impact on identity development. Additionally, the authors discussed the ways and key roles that educational stakeholders can engage through advocacy and the integration of a framework unique to the needs of Black girl student athletes. In Chapter 6, coauthors Mayes and Vega critically examined the unique challenges of Black girls in general and Black girls with disabilities in particular. They also proffered concrete strategies for helping professionals, such as school counselors and school psychologists, that promote college and career readiness among Black girls with disabilities. In Chapter 7, coauthors Hailu and Simmons presented an analytical perspective of Black immigrant women and young girls. In other words, the two authors focused specifically on the educational experiences of Black (African) immigrant women and young girls. Further, they used film-based inquiry to examine the racial, ethnic, and gender identity formation of Black (African) women and young girls and to shed light on their educational practices and experiences at both the precollegiate and collegiate levels.

In the second section, several contributing authors examined the higher educational and workforce experiences of Black women. In Chapter 8, coauthors Halsell and Gallant used a two-phase sequential explanatory mixed, research methods approach, including a survey and interviews, to examine high impact practices of Black undergraduate women. They explicitly pinpointed and examined those factors that contributed to engagement or lack of engagement while also exploring the intersection of race, gender, and class. In Chapter 9, coauthors Phelps-Ward and Howard critically studied the experiences of “going natural” and explored the educational experiences of six Black undergraduate and graduate women, as they relate to their hair, identity, and community. Through their chapter, they amplified the need for greater attention and understanding to the meaningfulness of Black women’s hair and how to better support them throughout their collegiate years. In Chapter 10, coauthors Sims and Carter used an intersectional lens to explore leadership and some of the frequent challenges Black women and young girls face as they develop as leaders. They also gave particular attention to how identity, bias, invisibility, and disinvestment frequently shape the leadership acumen of Black women and young girl as they progress through childhood, adolescence, early career, and executive ranks.

Putting this edited volume together, one of our primary intents was to assemble an assortment of chapters from scholars, researchers, and practitioners across a range of fields, who could assist in advancing the scholarly literature on Black women and young girls. As editors, we believe that we succeeded in our quest. Further, we believe that the edited volume shatters some of the many mythologies about Black women and young girls, while pinpointing some of the common challenges they experience in education contexts and beyond. Another intent of this edited volume was to offer education researchers, scholars, policy makers, and practitioners some practical suggestions or recommendations on

ways to improve the educational experiences of Black women and young girls. We believe that we succeeded in this quest as well.

In closing, we are very pleased on how this edited volume finally came together. Equally important, we are excited about the individual contributions of the authors and how all the chapters, as a collective, shed important insights into the educational experiences of Black women and young girls.

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MAKING THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG BLACK GIRLS VISIBLE

Iheoma U. Iruka and Celeste Hawkins

ABSTRACT

Considering the widespread focus on the academic achievement and social behavior of Black boys, there has been a limited focus on Black girls. Recent data from the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights show disproportionate suspension and expulsion rates for girls with Black girls suspended at higher rates (12%) than girls from other racial groups, and boys, of any other race/ethnicity. However, there has been limited discourse and attention about this disproportionality in suspension and expulsion, and other exclusionary practices experienced by Black girls. We frame this chapter through the lens of the bio-ecological systems and Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competences in Minority Children, and more importantly Critical Race Theory and FemCrit framework. We seek to make visible how the multiple systems that directly and indirectly influence and impact young Black girls' development, learning, and school and life success must be examined through the intersectionality of race and gender. Using national data we present some descriptive information on Black girls' home and early education environments, as well as their academic, socio-emotional, and health development in the early years. We also explore extant literature to connect how young Black girls' educational experiences must be intentionally attended to as it is damaging for their educational and life success. We provide practice, policy, and research implications and the importance of examining and addressing the unique experiences of Black girls and the pernicious impact of disparities and inequities in education.

African American Young Girls and Women in PreK12 Schools and Beyond
Advances in Race and Ethnicity in Education, Volume 8, 7–27
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ISSN: 2051-2317/doi:10.1108/S2051-23172022000008001

Keywords: Black girls; suspension; exclusion; Critical Race Theory; FemCrit; early childhood

MAKING THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG BLACK GIRLS VISIBLE

This chapter addresses the crisis of educational exclusion and the invisibility of young Black¹ girls, whose educational experiences (including early care and education) are intertwined with inequities that intersect with race/ethnicity, socioeconomics, gender, and disability. The promise of schooling tends to be deeply rooted in the history and culture of Blacks. In an age where there is increasingly concern that significant numbers of Black children are not prepared for today's workplace, the efforts to improve their educational outcomes intensifies. Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, asserted: "Fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education* and 40 years after President Johnson declared a War on Poverty many minority and lower-income children still lack a fair chance to live, learn, thrive and contribute in America" (*State of America's Children*, 2004, p. 1).

The education system in the United States is failing considerable numbers of Black children and the data for Black girls in some areas are dire. Black girls are six times as likely to be suspended compared to White girls; Black boys are three times as likely to be suspended compared to White boys (*U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights*, 2014). These numbers are higher in some states such as New York City and Boston (*Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda*, 2015). In addition, though the Black-White gap in fourth grade reading scores for females is slightly lower at 25 points compared to the Black-White gap for males at 28 points; Black females score 207 compared to 233 for White females (199 for Black males and 227 for White males) (*Vanneman, Hamilton, Baldwin Anderson, & Rahman*, 2009). A similar finding exists for fourth grade math scores with the Black-White female gap slightly smaller at 24 points; Black females score 223 compared to 246 for White females (221 for Black males and 249 for White males). Thus, while Black females may score slightly higher in reading and math, they are still significantly behind White females and males. This calls for a closer examination of the education environment and learning opportunities provided to young Black females especially in the early years (*Claessens, Duncan, & Engel*, 2009; *Duncan et al.*, 2007).

The primary goals of this chapter are to (1) make visible the educational experiences of young Black girls (2) offer significant information on Black girls early life and educational experiences and (3) pinpoint the factors that may support (or inhibit) school and life success of Black girl. Most importantly, we seek to elevate the awareness of inequitable opportunities that Black girls experience in the early years that may deter their optimal development without attention and intervention.