Formalizing an Argument: Write-Up

To give some context for the argument, it is based off the socialization that children get primarily from their parents in their early years of life as well as other authority figures or role models such as schoolteachers or outside mentors. Parents and other adult figures are essentially “the interpreters and instructors of the value systems that are in place in our Society” (Vittrup and Holden, 2010). These socializations can lead to the overt or covert learning of prejudices which can be observed in children as young as three to seven years of aged as demonstrated in Kenneth and Mamie Clark 1940’s “Doll Test.” Depending on the parent and their own prejudices and biases, the influence on the child can be positive or negative. Given this brief context I will now present my argument, premises, and conclusion.

***Argument*** *–* Children/Adolescence can develop prejudiced mindsets

***P1***–Children/Adolescence observe prejudice behaviors -> Children/Adolescence mimic those behaviors

***P2*** *–* Children/Adolescence mimic prejudiced behaviors ->Children/Adolescence develop prejudiced mindsets

In a typical intergroup study, participants ages 6 – 11 who are unacquainted with one another take part in a summer school session. They are initially given various tasks to measure factors such as cognitive-development level and self-esteem, which are hypothesized to affect intergroup attitudes. Students were then assigned different groups based off the color of a t-shirt they are given. Group characteristics and the treatment of groups are then manipulated. One study tested children’s intergroup attitudes as it related to how teachers use labeling and functional uses of color groups within classrooms (Bigler et al., 1997). In the experimental classrooms the teachers used color groups to organize the room extending to bulletin boards, desk, and activities. This separated the children into their own in-groups for the next several weeks. The control classroom did not implement any type of color labeling or grouping. After several weeks the students were evaluated to observe their levels of perception between color groups in the classroom based on competence and performance. In addition, they were evaluated for behavioral biases and preference amongst peers. In-group biases were developed in only the experimental classrooms. This study provides evidence for both *P1* and *P2*.

***P3*** *–* Children/Adolescence develop prejudiced mindsets -> Children/Adolescence believe that mindsets are appropriate, becoming “entrenched”

In high schools across the country, it has been seen that there have been multiple bullying incidents, some leading to death, based off some form of prejudice or discriminatory behavior (e.g., anti-gay bullying). Although there have been attempts to address the bullying, there is not much acknowledgement of the prejudice and intolerance surrounding the behaviors. Many teens did not see their actions as offensive or inappropriate. However, around the country schools have been aiming to implement intergroup dialogue programs in efforts to address the problematic behavior seem from students (Griffin et al., 2012).

***Conclusion*** *–* To avoid entrenched prejudice, children should observe as little prejudice as possible