

Katy Crispens, Mazelie Passmore, Hannah Scopp, Jahsey Brown, Shoshana Levy, Nathaniel Pearl, Jonah Brenner, Melanie Killen

*Human Development and Quantitative Methodology, University of Maryland*

## INTRODUCTION

- Children are aware of socioeconomic inequality from a young age, yet less is known about how children and adolescents internalize and reason about wealth-based assumptions in academic contexts.
- Research indicates that older children tend to include low-wealth characters more often than younger children in order to rectify unequal access to opportunity (McGuire et al., 2024).
- Studies also suggest that children predict high-wealth characters will be more exclusionary towards low-wealth characters (Burkholder et al., 2020).
- The current study sought to investigate how children evaluate and reason about wealth-based assumptions of math competence, along with how the race of the characters may influence evaluations.

**QUESTION:** How do children's own evaluations of wealth-based exclusion inform their predictions of other children's inclusion choices in an academic context?

## METHODS

### PARTICIPANTS

- $N = 145$ , ages 7-to-15-years-old ( $M_{age} = 9.76$ )
- 37.24% White, 11.72% Black, 8.28% Asian, 6.21% Latino, 25.52% Multiracial, 6.9% other, 4.44% N/A
- 49.66% Girls

### PROCEDURE

- Participants viewed a vignette of a Black or white high-wealth child excluding a low-wealth peer and evaluated the exclusion using a Likert scale from "Really not OK" to "Really OK".



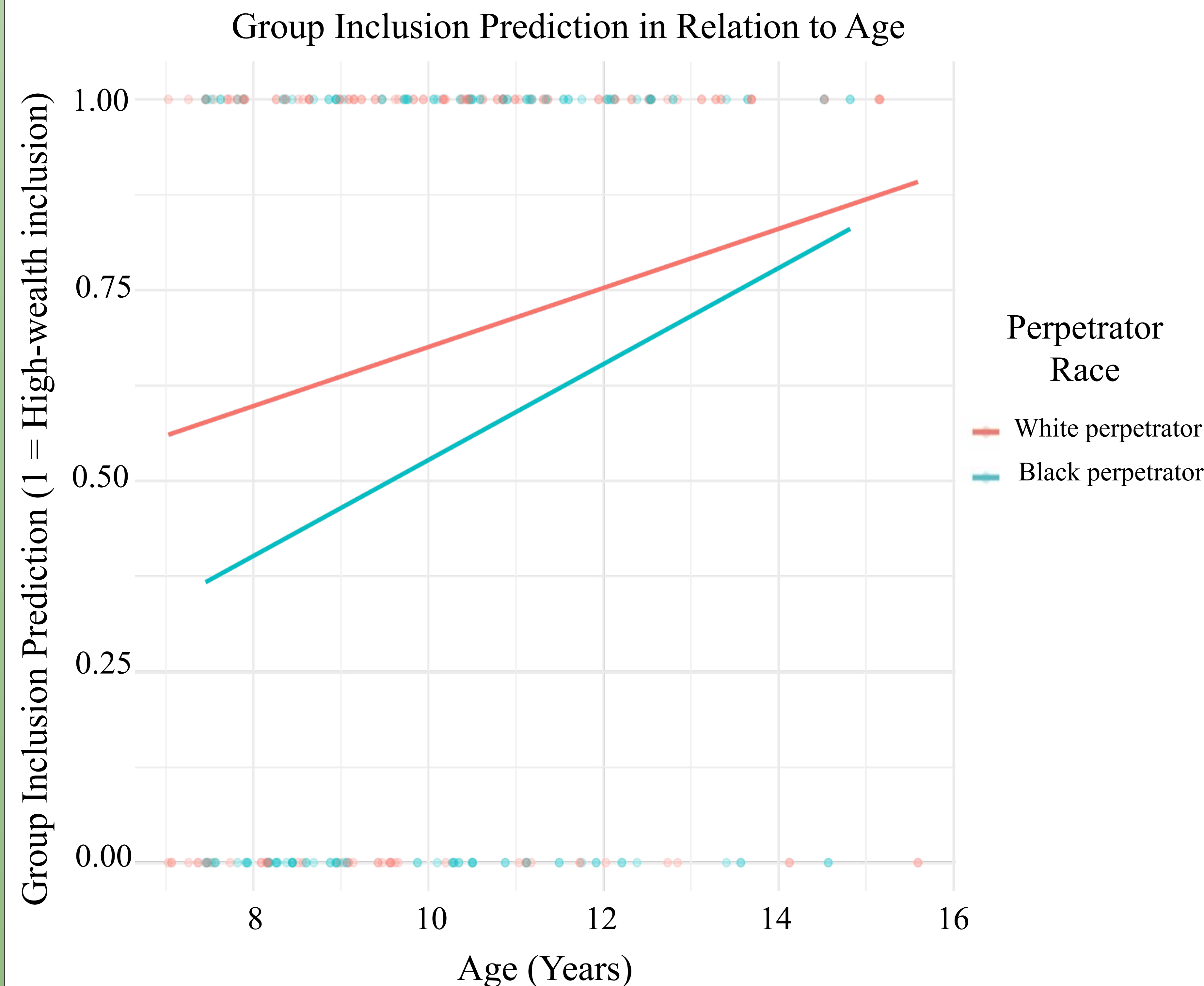
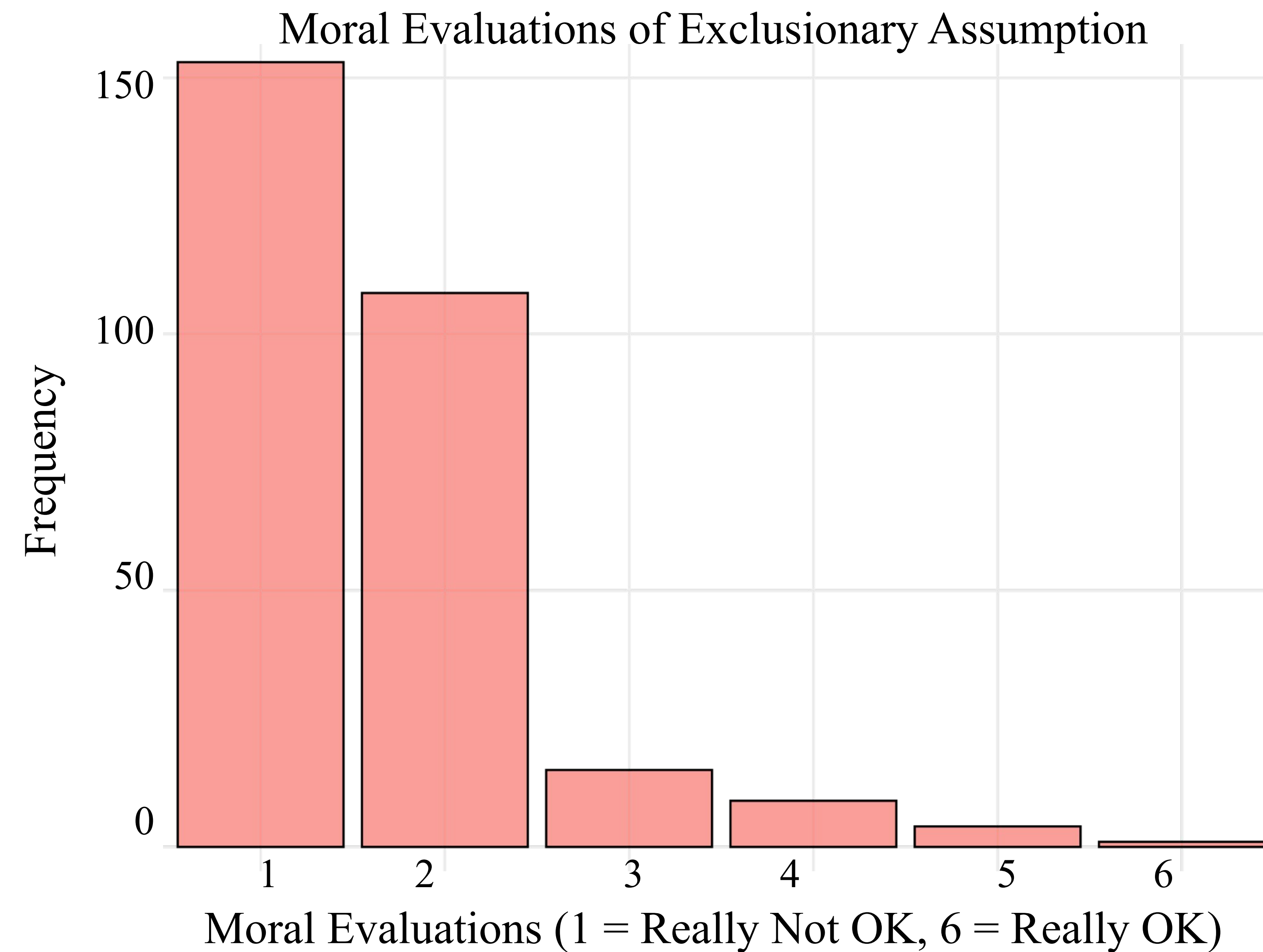
"I don't know, I just don't think Sam could be good at math because her family does not have much money. I don't want to pick Sam to be my math partner. I'm gonna find someone who is as good as me."

- Participants were then asked which child they thought the group would include in an after-school math club.

Who do you think the group of kids will include?



## RESULTS



## DISCUSSION

- The majority of participants evaluated exclusion of the low-wealth character negatively, with most rating the act as (1) "Really Not OK" and (2) "Not OK".
- These findings show that most participants, regardless of age or character race, took a moral approach to their evaluations and viewed the exclusion as wrong and unfair towards the low-wealth character.
- Despite their own negative moral evaluations of wealth-based assumptions, with age, children were more likely to predict the group would show a preference for the high-wealth character and exclude the low-wealth character ( $p < .01$ ).
- These findings show that children consider both their own moral judgments and expectations of others, weighing multiple perspectives to understand and determine wealth-based exclusion.
  - age:  $p < .05$
  - perpetrator race:  $p = .0009$

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Evidence of this higher-level reasoning can inform future intervention for older children and adolescents.
- Further research regarding the influence of the character's races on participant evaluations can determine how children think race plays a role in inclusion/exclusion tendencies.

## REFERENCES

Burkholder, A., et al. (2020). Children's and adolescents' evaluations of intergroup exclusion in interracial and interwealth per contexts. *Child Development*, 91(2), e512-e527. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13249>

McGuire, L., Marlow, C., et al. (2024). Children's and adolescents' evaluations of wealth-related STEM inequality. *Social Development*, 33(1), e12710. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12710>