Building Blocks of Difference: How Inequalities are (Re)Produced through Disciplinary Practices and Interactions in Preschool

by

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DEDICATION

To my family.

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ABSTRACT

Much policy research suggests preschool undermines educational inequalities, especially gender, race, and social class disparities in educational outcomes. Using data from ethnographic observations in three preschools (nine classrooms total) and interviews with preschool educators observed, this dissertation examines how disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions in preschool classrooms construct and perpetuate social inequalities.

In the second Chapter of my dissertation (published in *Sociology of Education* 2017) I find that heteronormativity permeates preschool classrooms where teachers construct and occasionally disrupt gendered sexuality in many ways, and children reproduce and sometimes resist these identities and norms in their daily play. Across the three preschools I observed, heteronormativity shaped teachers' delineation of behaviors as appropriate or in need of discipline. Teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization also affected their response to children's behaviors such as heterosexual romantic play (kissing and relationships), bodily displays, and bodily consent. This work demonstrates how children begin to make sense of heteronormativity and the rules associated with sexuality through interactions with their teachers and peers in preschool.

The third Chapter of my dissertation examines how disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions operate in racialized, classed, and gendered ways, in preschool. Discipline inequality, especially experiences of exclusionary discipline, have long-term effects on educational outcomes. In this Chapter, I find preschool teachers' perceptions of students'

misbehavior vary by students' intersectional social statuses despite that most children's self-regulation and behavioral skills are at similar stages developmentally in preschool. My data suggest that race, class, and gender compositions of preschool classrooms matter for students' experiences of discipline inequalities. I found that preschool teachers provided more monitoring and discipline to girls from low-socioeconomic backgrounds when they were in classrooms that were mostly middle-class; middle-class black boys received more monitoring and discipline than their peers when they were in classrooms that were majority white, but that also had a significant proportion of black students; and I found equitable discipline in classrooms that were predominately non-white but racially diverse in the proportions of students from non-white subgroups, and that exclusively served low-SES students.

The fourth Chapter of this dissertation examines how the "gender-neutral" developmental tenet, "follow the child", guides the organizational logic and gender substructure of preschool classrooms. I argue that teachers assume a gendered child, and therefore "follow" a *boy* or a *girl*, resulting in preschool teachers "following the *gendered* child." I find that in preschool, boys perceived behavioral "needs" are accommodated and receive less disciplinary responses from teachers, while girls receive increased disciplinary intervention for their behaviors. My data suggest that preschool teachers foster a masculine learning environment in which teachers implement gendered curricular accommodations (e.g., wrestling, gun play, and heavy work) aimed at fostering, rather than curbing, boys perceived unchangeable behavioral needs such as roughhousing and physical play. Additionally, I find that there is gender inequality in the distribution of resources in preschool classrooms. I argue that "following the child" results in teachers utilizing gendered practices which differentially prepare boys and girls for kindergarten,

and may be at odds with the learning environments and expectations placed on boys in primary and secondary years of schooling.

Taken collectively, the chapters of my dissertation provide qualitative data on how preschool disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions construct and enforce unequal organizational arrangements for boys and girls in schooling.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Schools are a primary socializing agent. Along with teaching cognitive skills, schools are an important site for imparting moral norms, shaping individual attitudes, and reinforcing social structure to mold youth for their future adult roles in society (Ramey 2015; Arum 2003; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Durkheim 1961). Rules that govern children and their behavior provide the foundation of social order within the classroom. These rules are often framed within schools as neutral and said to be applied to children in objective ways. However, according to Foucault (1979) discipline has become the new mode of domination as it establishes an identity for students based on teachers' perceptions of their behavior. Schools disciplinary techniques produce individual social identities of good, bad, troubled, gifted, etc. (Foucault 1979). Through this process, "school rules operate as instruments of normalization. Children are sorted, evaluated, ranked, and compared on the basis of (mis)behavior: what they do that violates, conforms to, school rules…the objective of this mode of power is the production of people who are docile workers, self-regulating, and self-disciplined" (Ferguson 2000:52). In this sense, discipline acts a means of "moral education" (Durkheim 1961). Along with teaching cognitive skills, schools are an important site for imparting moral norms, shaping individual attitudes, and reinforcing social structure (Bowles and Gintis 1976; Durkheim 1961).

Reproduction theory has been widely used to discuss how schools reinforce existing social inequalities especially regarding race, gender, and class (Bowles and Gintis 1976). Instead of viewing schools as "great equalizers," reproduction theory states schools exaggerate and

solidify inequalities children bring to school. Reproduction theory typically looks at class, race, and gender as analytically distinct categories involved in the reproduction of inequality. However, it is less clear how schools play a role in reproducing these social inequalities when we consider class, race, and gender to be intertwined.

For many children, preschool represents their first experience with an educational institution. At the policy level, preschool is touted as a way to undermine educational inequalities, specifically those pertaining to gender, race, and social class disparities in educational outcomes. However, my dissertation examines how disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions in preschool classrooms construct and perpetuate social inequalities. By disciplinary interactions, I am referring to moments when teachers either verbally reprimand a child for their behavior (e.g., "Stop, that is not okay"), or moments when teachers issue a child a disciplinary consequence (e.g., timeout) for their classroom behavior. Using data from 10 months of observations in three preschools (nine classrooms total) and interviews with preschool educators observed, my dissertation examines the role of disciplinary practices in children's early socialization. I find that preschool teachers' disciplinary practices vary by children's intersectional social statuses – namely, gender, race, and social class. I also analyze teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization and how children reproduce meanings about gender and sexuality with their peers. Overall, I argue educational institutions begin participating in the reproduction of social inequalities in preschool with children at the young ages of 3-5 years old, through gendered, racialized, and classed applications of disciplinary practices and consequences. While we know how gender (Martin 1998) and race (Van Ausdale and Feagin 1996) are reproduced through preschool interactions, we know little about how children's

intersecting social statuses impact teachers' disciplinary practices and produce social inequalities in preschool.

Background and Significance

Sociologists have challenged the liberal belief that schools are meritocratic and that any and everyone, regardless of social, ethnic, or economic background, can be successful and achieve economic and social mobility (e.g., Bowles and Gintis 1976). Instead, radical schooling theorists have argued that schooling is a system that sorts and ranks students in a hierarchical way to prepare them for their place in the existing social hierarchy. A crucial element that works to create and reproduce this system of social inequality is the "hidden curriculum." The hidden curriculum reflects the views of the dominant class, and are covert lessons focused on controlling and disciplining children's bodies as a means of social control (Martin 1998). Additionally, the hidden curriculum seeks to reinforce and reproduce the unequal social hierarchy of dominance by exaggerating, instead of eliminating, the inequalities that children bring from their home and family life into school.

Teachers also place significant importance on students acting appropriately, as conformity to the rules is viewed by adults as essential and necessary behavior that must be in place to create a conducive learning environment (Ferguson 2000). Therefore, rules that govern children and their behavior provide the foundation of social order within the classroom. These rules are often framed within schools as neutral and said to be applied to children in objective ways. Schools disciplinary techniques produce individual social identities of good, bad, troubled, gifted, etc. (Foucault 1979).

Researchers have documented that the "school-to-prison pipeline," or the process by which children are pushed out of school and into the criminal justice system, now begins in

preschool (Adamu and Hogan 2015). While this process is racialized and classed, boys account for two out of three preschool suspensions, and boys are over 4.5 times more likely to be expelled in preschool than girls (Gilliam 2005). These data demonstrate that the "school-to-prison pipeline" is highly gendered (Adamu and Hogan 2015; Gilliam 2005). Boys also have more difficulty in school than girls. In comparison to girls, boys have higher rates of developmental problems, antisocial behavior, disruptive behavior, and attention disorders (Chang et al. 2010; Buchmann and DiPrete 2006; Halpern 1997). As girls have lower rates of antisocial behavior in preschool though elementary school, girls exhibit less disruptive conduct than do boys, and boys have stronger tendencies towards externalizing behaviors (Olson et al. 2009; Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson 2005; Raffaelli, Crockett, and Shen 2005). "[…] Preschoolers who manifest high levels of aggression, impulsivity, and inattention, often labeled 'externalizing' symptoms, are more likely than others to show persistent maladjustment across the transition from early to middle childhood" (Olson et al. 2009). Additionally, research shows that female advantage in academic achievement persists through middle school to college (Buchmann and DiPrete 2006). Therefore, it is important to examine discipline in early childhood as along with constructing gender differences, the gendered application and disproportionate outcomes of discipline matter policy wise too. Not only are boys at a disadvantage with academic achievement and social and emotional behavior in comparison to girls, boys also are subject to higher rates of discipline as early as preschool.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position statement on developmentally appropriate practice, the purpose of discipline, commonly referred to as child guidance by early educators, is not to control or punish children, but rather to help children learn to be cooperative (NAEYC 2009). Effective, and developmentally

appropriate techniques of child guidance should help children learn self-control, learn how to take responsibility for their actions, and begin to solve their problems on their own. It is teachers' task to help children develop responsibility and self-regulation through creating a "caring community of learners" (NAEYC 2009). Natural and logical consequences (i.e. if you are not nice to your friends, they will not want to play with you) are commonly used in place of punishment techniques in preschool classrooms in order to motivate children's self-control. Whereas punishment is thought of as relying on arbitrary consequences, or penalties for wrongdoings, logical consequences give children the opportunity to learn from their experience and see how to avoid undesired consequences and instead achieve desired goals. Therefore, preschool curricula place great emphasis on social and emotional development and behavior as these are key aspects that children need to develop in order to achieve school success. In fact, "Kindergarten teachers rank self-regulation- the ability to control one's emotions and behavior and to resist impulses- as the characteristic most necessary for school readiness" (Teaching Strategies 2010). However, early deficits in self-regulation play a substantial role in the development of externalizing behaviors (Chang et al. 2010).

Discipline Disparities in Preschool by Gender, Race, and Class

In the United States, public preschool is not as accessible as private preschool. In fact, only 60% of public school districts in the nation have free, public preschool (U.S. DOE Office for Civil Rights 2014, Issue Brief No. 2). Additionally, within the school districts that offer public preschool programs, only half of them are accessible to all students within that district. Most public preschools reserve their enrollment for low-income students, or students from racial or disability sub-groups. This means that many more children are enrolled in private (for-profit) preschools, rather than public preschools.

The data on public preschools reflects a significant gender disparity in discipline. Specifically, boys were found to represent about 79% of preschool children who had been suspended once. In terms of preschool children who had been suspended multiple times, boys accounted for 82% of multiple suspensions. These figures are drastically disproportionate as boys only represent 54% of preschool enrollment. This means that "boys receive more than three out of four, out-of-school preschool suspensions" (U.S. DOE Office for Civil Rights 2014, Issue Brief No. 2: pg. 1). While girls' rates of suspension were not as disproportionate as boys, black, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander girls, represented, "a larger percentage (30% or more) of out-of-school suspensions within their racial or ethnic group than girls within other racial or ethnic groups" (U.S. DOE Office for Civil Rights 2014, Issue Brief No. 2: pg. 3).This pattern is also similar in private preschools where the school populations are not as skewed toward low-income and at-risk children as public preschools (Gilliam 2005).

Gender also influences parents' and teachers' ratings of externalizing behaviors. Externalizing behaviors, or externalizing problems, represents an "index of diverse behaviors encompassing children's physical aggression, oppositional behavior, covert aggression, emotion dysregulation, and rule-breaking behavior" (Dodge, Coie, and Lynam 2006 as cited in Olson et al. 2018:2). Mothers and teachers rate boys as having higher rates of externalizing behaviors than girls, putting boys at an elevated risk for increased levels of externalizing problems (Olson et al. 2018). Conversely, boys have higher rates than girls of oppositional deviance disorder, externalizing problems, and impulsivity/inattention (Olson et al. 2013).

Race also plays a significant role in teachers' perceptions of problematic behavior that warrants discipline. Teachers have been found to hold more negative expectations, and higher ratings of externalizing behaviors, for black children than white children (Olson et al. 2018;

Tenenbaum and Ruck 2007). As Ferguson (2000) found in her ethnographic study of inner-city high schoolers, teachers found minority boys to be threatening, and used that belief as a rational for using high levels of surveillance and discipline. In response to their teachers' gendered beliefs, students transformed discourse surrounding punishment as a negative sanction, to a positive social achievement. The punishing room, where students were sent for breaking school rules, became viewed by students as a positive achievement as it implied that you actively contested adult rules and power (Ferguson 2000).

Amanda Lewis (2003) conducted a yearlong ethnographic study in three elementary schools and found that curriculum, school organization, and instruction highlight the ways that racism is taught and learned in schools. Specifically, she finds that:

> Schools play a role in the production of race as a social category both through implicit and explicit lessons and through school practices… Children were not only learning racial lessons but were receiving different educational opportunities. Racial inequalities then are, at least in part, products of racialized institutional and interactional practices within the education system (Lewis 2003:188).

Racial disparities in school discipline also begin in preschool. While black children represent about 18% of preschool enrollment, they account for 48% of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension. This is drastically different than white students who represent 43% of preschool enrollment, but account for only 26% of the preschool children who received more than one out-of-school suspension (U.S. DOE Office for Civil Rights 2014, Issue Brief No. 1).

Lastly, while little research has been conducted on how students' social class plays a role in teachers' perceptions of their behavior and allocation of discipline, some researchers have examined how children begin to engage in class reproduction at a young age. Rist, in his 1970 observational study of a class of students across their kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades provide

one of the first accounts of how students are placed in within-class groups and how teaching and content varies across these groups. Specifically, Rist (1970) found that individual teachers can apply their instructional practice in ways that variably distribute opportunities to learn across students in their classrooms (see also, Streib 2011). Additionally, teachers rate children with lower SES backgrounds as showing increased levels of externalizing problems at the start of kindergarten in comparison to children from higher SES backgrounds (Olson et al. 2018; Olson et al. 2013). Therefore, children with low SES backgrounds start kindergarten at an increased risk for externalizing behaviors (Olson et al. 2013).

Daycares magnify rather than diminish class differences (Nelson and Schutz 2007). As Calarco (2011) found, children's social-class background affects how they go about seeking help in the classroom. Specifically, middle-class children tend to request more help from teachers rather than waiting for assistance, therefore allowing them to receive more help and become more likely to complete assignments (Calarco 2011). Streib (2011) examined a four-year-old classroom and found similar processes at work in that the middle-class children in the classroom also tended to speak up and ask for more help than the working-class students. This restricted the working-class children from being able to gain power in the classroom and limited their ability to develop their language skills (Calarco 2011).

The data discussed above highlights several preschool discipline disparities in terms of gender, race, and class. However, this data is based on public preschools that are embedded within school districts. As private preschools are for-profit organizations, they are not required to release publicly available data on suspension, and expulsion rates, like public preschools are. Therefore, we know little about the discipline outcomes within private preschools of various levels of quality.

Preschoolers are expelled at rates of more than three times their older peers in grades kindergarten-12th, and boys are over 4.5 times more likely to be expelled than girls (Gilliam 2005). Additionally, African American children represent 18% of preschool enrollment, but account for 48% of children receiving multiple out-of-school suspensions. However, white children represent 43% of preschool enrollment, but account for only 26% of children receiving multiple out-of-school suspensions (U.S. DOE Office for Civil Rights 2014, Issue Brief No. 1). We also know boys have more difficulty in school than girls. In preschool though elementary school, boys have higher rates of developmental problems, antisocial behavior, disruptive behavior, and attention disorders (Chang et al. 2010). We know gender and racial disparities exist in preschool, but we know less about why these disparities begin in preschool. Also, much of this existing research utilizes quantitative data based on rates of disciplinary consequences like expulsion and suspension, leaving us with less knowledge about how other forms of disciplinary sanctions (e.g. corrective statements like "don't do that," or consequences like timeouts) are applied to students.

My dissertation contributes to extant research by providing rich qualitative data about how inequality is shaped in students' early educational experiences in preschool. Broadly, my dissertation examines how inequalities are reproduced through teachers' disciplinary interactions and disciplinary practices in preschool classrooms. In doing so, I examine several research questions: How do preschools participate in the gendered sexual socialization of children? What approaches to sexual socialization do teachers use in preschool? What messages about sexuality and gender do young children receive from teachers' sexual socialization approaches, and how do they reproduce, or resist, these messages with their peers? How might disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions in preschool, operate in racialized, classed, and gendered ways?

How do teachers' disciplinary responses to less consequential behaviors such as disobedience and disruptiveness vary by students' gender, race, and social class, in preschool? What are the mechanisms by which institutionalized practices embedded in preschool affect gender inequality? How are classroom practices that derive from developmental theories implemented in gendered ways? And, what are the unintended consequences of these institutionalized practices?

Importantly, my dissertation contributes needed qualitative data about how children's intersecting statuses and classroom contexts impact teachers' perceptions of behavior and teachers' disciplinary practices in ways that are associated with disparities in children's interactions with their teachers in preschool.

Summary of Articles

The second Chapter of this dissertation, "Reproducing (and Disrupting) Heteronormativity: Gendered Sexual Socialization in Preschool Classrooms," is published in *Sociology of Education* (Gansen 2017), and has received several awards, including: 2018 Best Graduate Student Paper Award from the Children and Youth Section of the American Sociological Association; 2018 Honorable Mention for the Sally Hacker Graduate Student Paper Award from the Sex and Gender Section of the American Sociological Association; and, the 2017 David Lee Stevenson Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award from the Sociology of Education Section of the American Sociological Association. We know very little about how teachers' practices construct or challenge discourses about sexuality in preschool. In this Chapter, I find that heteronormativity permeates preschool classrooms, where teachers construct (and occasionally disrupt) gendered sexuality in many ways, and children reproduce (and sometimes resist) these identities and norms in their daily play. Across the three preschools I observed, heteronormativity shaped teachers' delineation of behaviors as appropriate, or in need

of discipline. Teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization also affected their response to children's behaviors, such as heterosexual romantic play (kissing and relationships), bodily displays, and bodily consent. This work furthers our understanding of the role of schools in shaping children's sexual behaviors and identities by demonstrating how children begin to make sense of heteronormativity, and the rules associated with sexuality, through interactions with their teachers and peers in preschool.

The third Chapter of this dissertation, "Disciplining Difference(s): How Inequalities are Reproduced through Disciplinary Interactions in Preschool," received the 2018 Mark Chesler Paper Award from the Department of Sociology at the University of Michigan. This Chapter demonstrates how disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions operate in racialized, classed, and gendered ways in preschool. I find preschool teachers' perceptions of students' misbehavior vary by students' intersectional social statuses, despite that most preschool children's self-regulation and behavioral skills are at similar stages developmentally. My data suggest that the race, class, and gender compositions of preschool classrooms matter for students' experiences of discipline inequalities. I found that preschool teachers provide more monitoring and discipline to girls from low-socioeconomic backgrounds when they were in classrooms that were mostly middle-class; middle-class black boys received more monitoring and discipline than their peers when they were in classrooms that were majority white, but that also had a significant proportion of black students; and I found equitable discipline in classrooms that were predominately non-white but racially diverse in the proportions of students from non-white subgroups, and that exclusively served low-SES students. My data suggest that preschool is a foundational site in which educational inequalities are shaped early on through disciplinary interactions.

The fourth Chapter of this dissertation, “Following the (Gendered) Child: How Children’s Gendered Behaviors Become Enhanced, Extended, and Built in Preschool” examines how the seemingly “gender-neutral” developmental tenet of “follow the child” guides the organizational logic and gender substructure of preschool classrooms. I find that in preschool, boys perceived behavioral “needs” are accommodated and boys receive less disciplinary intervention from their teachers, while girls receive increased disciplinary intervention for their behaviors. I argue that the preschool curricula practice of “following the child” results in teachers utilizing gendered practices which may differentially prepare boys and girls for kindergarten. I find that in the nine preschool classrooms observed, boys perceived behavioral “needs” were accommodated and received less disciplinary responses from teachers, while girls received increased disciplinary intervention for their behaviors. My data suggest that preschool teachers foster a masculine learning environment in which teachers implement gendered curricular accommodations (e.g., wrestling, gun play, and heavy work) aimed at fostering, rather than curbing, boys perceived unchangeable behavioral needs such as roughhousing and physical play. Additionally, I find that there is gender inequality in the distribution of resources in preschool classrooms. Specifically, in the institutionalized gender-specific curricula embedded in preschool classrooms, as well as the unequal disciplinary treatment that boys and girls receive in preschool classrooms.

In the fifth and final Chapter of this dissertation, I discuss the sociological implications of these findings, including how the findings contribute to existing scholarship on the sociology of education, gender, sexuality, and the reproduction of inequalities in educational setting. I also discuss future research directions, including the need for longitudinal work that follows children

as they transition from one grade to another to examine how students' experiences of inequality are reproduced or disrupted throughout their educational careers.

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CHAPTER 2

Reproducing (and Disrupting) Heteronormativity:

Gendered Sexual Socialization in Preschool Classrooms[1]

Introduction

Preschool is an important site for socialization and the production of ideas about social life and inequality. Interactions in preschool facilitate the construction of gender (Martin 1998), race (Van Ausdale and Feagin 1996), and social class (Streib 2011), but could preschool also be an important site for sexuality? We know later school years construct sexuality and heteronormativity (e.g., Best 1983; Pascoe 2007; Thorne 1993), and we know other spheres—family (Martin 2009) and media (Martin and Kazyak 2009)—teach sexuality, but we do not yet know about the role of preschools in teaching, constructing, or disrupting sexuality. Preschool is an important and foundational educational context in which to examine sexual socialization and heteronormativity. Many children attend the social institution of preschool, and children's interactions in preschool provide the foundation for teacher–student interactions, expectations of themselves as students, and views toward education more generally.

This article examines the gendered sexual socialization children receive from interactions with teachers and peers in preschool. Sexual socialization is the process through which children come to understand rules, beliefs, and codes of conduct associated with sexual behaviors and

[1] Gansen, Heidi M. 2017. "Reproducing (and Disrupting) Heteronormativity: Gendered Sexual Socialization in Preschool Classrooms." *Sociology of Education,* 90(3), p.255-272.

sexuality; for example, messages about appropriate physical contact and behaviors with others. These messages about sexual behaviors and sexuality that children receive are gender specific (Martin and Luke 2010). Sexuality and gender are constructed part-and-parcel of one another; namely, to be a feminine girl/woman or a masculine boy/man requires that one also be heterosexual (Butler 1990; Ingraham 1994; Rich 1980; Rubin 1984). To “do gender” correctly, one must obey heteronormative ideals and heterosexual scripts (Rich 1980; West and Zimmerman 1987). As Martin and Kazyak (2009:316) state, “Heteronormativity structures social life so that heterosexuality is always assumed, expected, ordinary, and privileged.” This entanglement of sexuality and gender leads to gendered sexual socialization. Gendered sexual socialization is the process through which individuals, in this case preschool children, come to understand rules, beliefs, meanings, and gender specific codes of conduct associated with conducting oneself as “proper” girls or boys with respect to sexuality and sexual behaviors. Interactions with teachers and peers in schools provide messages about topics such as compulsory heterosexuality, sexual standards, and relationships (Rich 1980). Identifying how heteronormative culture is constructed and reproduced through school interactions may prevent the reproduction of inequalities pertaining to gender and sexuality that classroom processes often construct and maintain (Wilkinson and Pearson 2009). Gendered sexual socialization in preschool has significant consequences, as it creates differences in children’s classroom experiences, especially in terms of their interactions with teachers and peers, and facilitates heteronormative gendered and sexual double standards for girls and boys (Martin and Luke 2010). Preschool is a good place to begin this examination, because practices that facilitate heteronormativity in classrooms become more engrained in later years of schooling.

Using ethnographic data from 10 months of observations in nine preschool classrooms, I examine the gendered sexual socialization children receive from teachers' practices and which children then reproduce through peer interactions. My findings extend our understandings of gendered sexual socialization through demonstrating the pervasiveness of heteronormativity in young children's (3- to 5-year-olds) early interactions in school. I find heteronormativity permeates preschool classrooms, where teachers construct (and occasionally disrupt) gendered sexuality in a number of different ways, and children reproduce (and sometimes resist) these identities and norms in their daily play. I suggest heteronormativity influences teaching practices in preschool. Teachers use what I call *facilitative*, *restrictive*, *disruptive*, and *passive* approaches to sexual socialization in preschool classrooms. Teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization varied across preschools observed and affected teachers' responses to children's behaviors, such as heterosexual romantic play (kissing and relationships), bodily displays, and consent. Additionally, my data suggest children as young as age 3 are learning in preschool that boys have gendered power over girls' bodies. My findings demonstrate that before children have salient sexual identities of their own, they are beginning to make sense of heteronormativity and rules associated with sexuality through interactions with their teachers and peers in preschool.

Gender and Sexuality in Schools

Schools are heteronormative social contexts that often mirror the dominant beliefs and structures of society, including and especially, the norms and behaviors associated with "acceptable" sexuality (Epstein and Johnson 1998; Wilkinson and Pearson 2009). As a result, schools are critical sites in which dominant beliefs about sexuality and gender are (re)produced and enforced (Wilkinson and Pearson 2009). Pascoe (2007) argues that school rituals, pedagogy, curricula, and disciplinary practices inform heterosexualizing processes from elementary through

high school. Explicit and implicit lessons about sexuality, masculinities, and femininities, are also routinely conveyed to students through curricula and rituals, as well as interactions with peers, teachers, and school administrators (Garcia 2009; Wilkinson and Pearson 2009). Sometimes heteronormativity is relatively subtle in classrooms, exhibited through pervasive heteronormative practices and discourses and displays of appropriate gender roles (Eder and Parker 1987; Kehily and Nayak 1997). Other research has found explicit homophobic and sexualized forms of harassment are used to enforce heteronormativity in schools (e.g., Pascoe 2007). In classrooms, the collection of teachers' and students' habitus or cultural schemas can create and enforce the level of heteronormativity developed within schools (Bourdieu 2001; Hallett 2007; Wilkinson and Pearson 2009). These cultural schemas or habitus consist of teachers' and students' experiences, expectations, beliefs, and perspectives about sexuality. Heteronormativity gains more legitimacy in schools when a significant number of individuals utilize heteronormative schemas (Wilkinson and Pearson 2009). Heteronormative educational contexts also confine adolescents' sexuality while stigmatizing same-sex relationships or desires (Wilkinson and Pearson 2009).

Hidden curricula also operate within schools. Hidden curricula are covert lessons that often act as means of social control (Giroux and Purpel 1983; Jackson 1968). Sociologists have noted hidden curricula effects in topics such as social class (e.g., Anyon 1980; Bowles and Gintis 1976), disciplining bodies (e.g., Carere 1987; Foucault 1979; Martin 1998), and political socialization (e.g., Wasburn 1986). However, we know little about how teachers utilize hidden curricula on sexuality in ways that construct, normalize, and disrupt heterosexuality in classrooms, particularly during the early years of schooling. Students' interactions may reproduce and, at times, challenge heteronormativity and normative expressions of gender (Eder,

Evans, and Parker 1995). Through pedagogical practices, disciplinary practices, and interactions with students, high school teachers use informal curricula about sexuality to shape how (hetero)sexuality is constructed within schools (Pascoe 2007). These repetitive and regulative practices in classrooms contribute to students' habitus as they acquire knowledge about school and the social and cultural capital valued by teachers (Bourdieu 2001).

Young children's peer cultures involve the active construction, enforcement, and "doing" of sexuality and gender (Best 1983; Blaise 2005; Davies 2003; McNaughton 2000; Renold 2002, 2005; Robinson 2013; Thorne 1993; West and Zimmerman 1987). Renold (2000) argues that students engage in a "heterosexualizing process" beginning in elementary school. Through this process, students utilize heterosexual discourses and practices to portray themselves as "proper" girls and boys and to develop feminine and masculine identities. Thorne (1993) concludes that children in elementary school construct gender differences by utilizing heterosexuality to maintain gender boundaries and process cross-sex interactions. Children called upon sexual meanings to guide their gendered play practices, such as "chase-and-kiss" (Thorne 1993). Heteronormative play narratives, like marriage and rehearsing relationships, also guide young children's early peer interactions (Robinson 2013). Best (1983) found that 2nd-grade girls participated in gendered heterosexual discourses and practices through talk of having boyfriends and girlfriends. Additionally, in examining gender and sexuality from elementary school girls' points of view, Myers and Raymond (2010) found that girls defined their interests as boy-centered and they performed heteronormativity for other girls. Research shows adolescents are immersed in heterosexual interactive processes and performances, including homophobic and heterosexist harassment (Renold 2002, 2005). Middle and high school boys use name calling and "fag" discourses to protect and police masculinity (Pascoe 2007). In "doing gender" in these

ways to avoid social sanctions, boys and girls simultaneously produce and enforce heteronormativity (Neilson, Walden, and Kunkel 2000; Pascoe 2007; Wilkinson and Pearson 2009).

A vast body of literature points to students' awareness and sophisticated heteronormative understandings of sexuality in elementary school through high school. However, little work examines how heteronormativity is socially and developmentally constructed, and there are even fewer developmental accounts of how heteronormativity is founded in preschool (but see Martin 2009). Gendered power is embodied on several levels and in many contexts, but theory rarely explains how gendered power is learned. With more U.S. children attending preschool (61 percent of children spend an average of 33 hours per week in preschool [U.S. Census Bureau 2013]), and amid calls for universal preschool, preschool is a good place to begin examining children's sexual socialization, including how gendered power and heteronormativity are learned in schools.

Additionally, we know very little about how teachers' practices inform or disrupt heterosexualizing processes in schools. How might teachers construct or challenge discourses about sexuality in preschool? I suggest heteronormativity and gendered power begin to shape teachers' delineation of behaviors as appropriate, or in need of discipline or intervention, as early as preschool. My data contribute to scholarship on the role of schools in shaping the gendered sexual behaviors of students by demonstrating how preschool teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization shape students' sexual behaviors and interactions, often in gendered ways. Examining teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization illuminates how heterosexual discourses and practices become constructed, normalized, or disrupted in preschool classrooms.

By focusing on teachers' active role in students' sexual socialization, we can further our understanding of the role of schools in shaping children's sexual behaviors and identities.

Data and Methods

My data come from a larger ethnographic study in which I conducted extensive participant observations from July 2015 through April 2016 in three preschools in Michigan: Imagination Center, Kids Company, and Early Achievers.[1] This larger study focuses on teachers' use of disciplinary practices in preschool classrooms and how these practices vary by children's race, gender, and social class. Teachers and parents were informed I was conducting a study about disciplinary practices and their effectiveness in preschool classrooms. Upon completion of data collection and analysis for this project, I inductively recognized I had large codes regarding gender and sexual socialization from my observations. These data are the findings of this article.

In total, I observed nine preschool classrooms yielding more than 400 hours of observational data. Given the focus of the larger project on preschool disciplinary practices, I chose preschools based on their quality and size. Previous research indicates quality, type of preschool program (e.g., public, for-profit, faith-based), and size of classroom are predictors of preschool expulsion (Gilliam 2005; Gilliam and Shahar 2006). I determined preschool quality based on schools' Michigan Great Start to Quality rating. All three preschools received 4 out of 5 stars through Great Start to Quality, they ranged in total capacity from 86 to 138 children, and Early Achievers was nationally accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (see Table 1 for study overview). Two preschools (Imagination Center and Early Achievers) also participated in Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). GSRP is Michigan's state-funded preschool program for 4-year-olds with risk factors for educational failure. The curricula and daily schedules of the three preschools were similar. Imagination

Center and Early Achievers followed High Scope Curriculum; Kids Company followed Creative Curriculum (see Table 1).

A total of 116 children, primarily 3- to 5-year-olds, and 22 teachers[2] (15 teachers and seven part-time aides) were observed. All but two teachers were women, and the majority of teachers (16 of 22) were white.[3] At Imagination Center, four teachers and one part-time aide had bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education, and three teachers had Child Development certificates (one- to two-year degree programs); at Kids Company, one teacher had a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, and three teachers and two part-time aides had Child Development certificates; at Early Achievers, two teachers had bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education, and two teachers and two part-time aides had Child Development certificates. Of the children observed, 52 percent were girls and 48 percent were boys. There were 22 African American children, 13 Hispanic children, five Middle Eastern children, five Indian children, and four Asian children.[4] The remaining children were white. Teachers at Imagination Center and Kids Company perceived the majority of children as middle-class, based on parent occupation, number of parents in home, number of siblings, tuition cost, and teachers' perceptions of families' class status. Teachers sat and went through their students' family information binders with me when describing the children's class backgrounds. Children at Early Achievers were identified as low income, as they all received free or sliding-scale tuition (see Table 1).

On average, I observed two days a week: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. This was the majority of children's school day, prior to their nap. In total, I observed five classrooms at Imagination Center, with classroom averages of eight children and one teacher; two classrooms at Kids Company, with classroom averages of 20 children and two teachers; and

two classrooms at Early Achievers, with 16 children and two teachers in each classroom. The demographics of children at each preschool were as follows: the majority of children at Imagination Center were white and middle-class; at Kids Company, two-thirds of the children were white, one-third were non-white, and the majority were middle-class; and at Early Achievers, the vast majority of children were non-white and all were lower-class. The majority of children at these three preschools attended preschool all day and at least three days a week. Children typically arrived between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. and left between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m.

During observations, I carried a small notebook and recorded extensive fieldnotes, making sure to record direct dialogue when possible (see Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995). In most of the classrooms I observed, teachers introduced me to children as a visitor, and in interactions with children I confirmed my role as a non-sanctioning adult. In classrooms, I was a "reactive observer" (Streib 2011); when children invited me, I sat with them and joined in their play, listening intently to their conversations. During observations, I took on a middle-manager role (Gansen 2017; Mandell 1988). In a middle-manager role, researchers do not align themselves with teachers or children but instead seek to establish rapport with teachers and children simultaneously. I realized how much rapport and trust I had gained when teachers shared opinions about children and parents who got on their nerves, and children shared opinions about other students, invited me to join in their play, and taught me about classroom jobs or rules. I varied my approach between holistic observations and more structured techniques, in which I observed one area of the classroom, particular children, or particular teachers (especially if a child was being disciplined). I followed Thorne's (1993) caution about "big man bias" and observed children for equal amounts of time, making sure to not only observe classrooms' popular and active children.

Given the larger project these data stem from, my observations were primarily focused on children's involvement in behavior management with peers and teachers, and teachers' use of disciplinary practices. I coded fieldnotes using the qualitative software program NVivo. Coded categories emerged from my data and were not predetermined (Glaser and Strauss 1999). Some of my most commonly used codes, and the themes that emerged as the findings of this article, were kissing, relationships/crushes, bodily displays, consent, house play, wedding play, and same-sex relationships. These codes, along with others, were sub-coded based on teachers' responses to children's behavior (by the child's gender), and by teachers' gendered sexual socialization approaches. For example, I applied the code "bodily displays" anytime a child revealed their nude body or underwear in the classroom. I then sub-coded this by gender to separate incidents in which boys versus girls engaged in bodily displays. I also sub-coded teachers' responses to bodily displays to assess how children's gender affected teachers' approaches to these incidences. I coded teachers' responses to children's sexual behaviors by teachers' approach; for example, facilitative, restrictive, passive, or disruptive. I assessed disconfirming evidence through my codes on teachers' restrictive and disruptive approaches to capture not only the ways in which heteronormativity permeated the preschool classrooms I observed, but also how the construction and normalization of heterosexuality was disrupted by teacher and peer interactions in preschool classrooms.

Findings

How do preschools participate in the gendered sexual socialization of children? What approaches to sexual socialization do teachers use in preschool? What messages about sexuality and gender do young children receive from teachers' sexual socialization approaches, and how do they reproduce, or resist, these messages with their peers? I argue that heteronormativity

permeates preschool classrooms, where teachers construct (and occasionally disrupt) gendered sexuality in a number of different ways, and children reproduce (and sometimes resist) these identities and norms in their daily play. Specifically, I find that preschool teachers use four approaches to gendered sexual socialization in preschool classrooms: facilitative, restrictive, disruptive, and passive approaches (see Table 2 for an overview of these approaches across preschools observed). Facilitative approaches include teachers actively promoting or encouraging heterosexual discourses and practices in preschool classrooms. Restrictive approaches involve teachers sanctioning children's engagement in sexual discourses and practices. Disruptive approaches consist of teachers' acknowledgment or acceptance of counter-hegemonic performances of sexuality (i.e., actions that interrupt heteronormativity). Finally, passive approaches to sexual socialization involve teachers ignoring sexualized behaviors without imposing disciplinary consequences.

In the following sections, I demonstrate how teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization affected how heterosexual discourses and practices were constructed, normalized, or disrupted in preschool classrooms I observed. Additionally, I highlight how teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization varied across these preschools and affected teachers' responses to children's behaviors, such as heterosexual romantic play (kissing and relationships), bodily displays, and consent. I also demonstrate how teachers' years of experience, and potentially age, may have affected how problematic or progressive teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization were in the classrooms I observed.

Facilitative Approaches:
Constructing and Normalizing Heterosexuality at Imagination Center

Across preschools, teachers used facilitative approaches to gendered sexual socialization in which heteronormativity was constructed and normalized through everyday classroom practices (e.g., reading traditional fairy tales and heteronormative play). I focus on Imagination Center because facilitative approaches were most pronounced and most frequently used at this school. At Imagination Center, teachers allowed, and at times actively constructed, heterosexuality through facilitative approaches to sexual socialization. Teachers at Imagination Center were much younger and had less teaching experience than teachers at the other preschools; most were in their early- to mid-20s and had three years teaching experience, on average. In these five classrooms, teachers allowed children to kiss children of the opposite gender if the child did not say "stop" or "get away from me." These teachers also had heteronormative ideas of children who had "crushes" or "boyfriends/girlfriends," and they allowed and encouraged these children to kiss. For example, one day a toddler-aged class was walking down the hall as an older class was lining up for recess. A teacher said to Alexis (3 years old), "Oh, Paul [2 years old] is coming down the hall. Alexis, do you want Paul to kiss you?" Alexis replied, "No." Another teacher said, "Not today." The teacher then looked at me and said, "It's so cute. Paul has a crush on Alexis and he loves to kiss her. Usually, Alexis wants him to which is why I always ask her when we see Paul if she wants a kiss." In this example, teachers participated in the construction and normalization of heterosexuality by facilitating heterosexual discourses and practices for Alexis and Paul. Teachers assumed Paul (despite being 2 years old) had a "crush" (language typically used for adult and adolescent attraction) on Alexis; so much so, they asked Alexis for Paul, even though Paul was unable to ask and did not articulate the request to kiss Alexis on his own.

At Imagination Center, teachers' facilitative practices shaped their responses and interpretations of children's behaviors as romantic in nature. Imagination Center teachers often talked about two children, Carson and Lydia (both three years old), as if they were in a relationship. At the start of my Imagination Center observations, Carson and Lydia resisted any notions they were boyfriend/girlfriend, but they were opposite-gender friends who often played together. While playing in the house area one day, Lydia said to Carson, "I'm the Mom, you're the Dad." Carson replied, "Who's your sweetie?" Lydia looked at Carson and said, "You are." Carson quickly responded, "I am only your friend." However, two months into my observations, Carson would say things like, "Where's my Lydia?" when looking for her on the playground. Teachers, too, frequently asked Lydia about Carson's whereabouts through questions such as, "Where is your husband [Carson]?" Teachers would even talk with one another, and me, about Carson and Lydia's relationship futuristically, saying things like, "Could you imagine if Lydia and Carson got married? They would be the spaciest couple ever." In asking these questions, teachers reinforced children's reproduction of adult culture. By using facilitative approaches to sexual socialization, teachers at Imagination Center constructed and normalized heterosexual discourses and practices in ways such that heteronormativity permeated children's peer interactions. When a preschool teacher was about to get married, she talked to one child, Willow, about how the child too will wear a wedding dress when she gets married. A couple days later, Willow wore a dress to school, and the teacher commented that Willow was "practicing" wearing a wedding dress. Other teachers complimented Willow on how beautiful she was and what a pretty bride she would make someday.

Teachers at Imagination Center also used facilitative approaches to sexual socialization in which they encouraged "new" relationships between boys and girls. For example, during lunch

one day, Ms. Mary said to 3-year-old Aiden, “Hi Aiden, how are you?” “Great,” Aiden replied. Ms. Mary turned to Ms. Amanda and said, “He’s so cute.” Ms. Mary then looked at Kennedy, a 3-year-old girl sitting next to her, and said, “We like Aiden; he’s great, and really cute. Do you know who he is?” Ms. Mary motioned to Aiden, pointing him out to Kennedy. In this example, Ms. Mary normalized and promoted heterosexuality to Kennedy, encouraging her to “like” Aiden, a boy Ms. Mary identified as “cute.” This example demonstrates teachers’ participation in facilitating the construction and normalization of heteronormativity by assessing and promoting the cuteness and boyfriend viability of young children—here a 4-year-old.

At Imagination Center, teachers were often amused by children’s heterosexual relationships and laughed when girls made comments like, “Everyone with boyfriends stop and kiss.” Occasionally, after these comments, some girls would find and kiss their boyfriends. More often though, girls would chat among themselves about who in the class did or did not have a boyfriend. Additionally, when children of the opposite gender walked around holding hands, teachers, in front of other children, commented, “Look, there’s a budding romance emerging.” Through these “budding romance” comments, and by allowing girls to stop and kiss their boyfriends, teachers facilitated children’s sexual socialization through promoting and normalizing heterosexuality.

However, teachers did not apply these comments equally to children’s actions. Despite its frequent occurrence across all nine classrooms, teachers did not make “budding romances” comments when children of the same gender engaged in hand-holding behaviors. Instead, teachers responded to same-gender signs of affection or homosocial behaviors as friendly. One day during recess at Imagination Center, Katie and Annie (both 3 years old) were walking around the playground talking and holding hands. Ms. Amanda turned to me and said, “Look at

those two, they are best friends." Teachers frequently responded this way when two girls or two boys engaged in homosocial behaviors, and occasionally teachers ignored homosocial behaviors. However, girls participated in homosocial behaviors more frequently than did boys. These examples illustrate that teachers were not just promoting romance among children; rather, and more specifically, they were promoting heterosexual romance.

Heteronormativity includes and requires certain kinds of gendered roles and power. At Imagination Center, gendered power became visible through teachers' approaches to kissing consent. By "kissing consent" I am referring to teachers' rules regarding when children, primarily boys, could kiss girls, with and without girls' permission. One day, after witnessing Aiden kiss Hannah (both 5 years old), I heard Aiden ask Hannah, "What's the matter? It's just a kiss!" Ms. Brittany, who overheard the interaction between Aiden and Hannah, said to Aiden, "Do you have a crush Aiden?" Aiden blushed and while scooting away from Ms. Brittany replied, "Yeah." Ms. Brittany smiled at him and Aiden ran off to play. Ms. Heather, who was also nearby, said to me, "Aiden gave Hannah a kiss yesterday for her birthday; just planted a big one on her! It was so sweet!" In this case, teachers did not reiterate rules of kissing consent with Aiden. Rather, teachers facilitated heterosexual discourses and practices by brushing off Aiden's kisses as sweet gestures that resulted from his "crush" on Hannah. These teachers engaged in facilitative practices of sexual socialization through imbuing and normalizing Aiden's gestures in heterosexuality by calling it a "crush." By using facilitative approaches in this instance, teachers gave Aiden gendered power over Hannah in terms of consent; Aiden's desire to kiss Hannah was put ahead of Hannah's lack of consent on her birthday and the day after. In doing so, teachers facilitated children's sexual socialization through providing messages about heterosexuality,

gendered power, and consent—that girls' consent was not required, or at least was less important, than boys' desires.

Throughout observations at Imagination Center, teachers' facilitative approach of using the word "crush" operated as a justification for certain behaviors that obfuscated (1) the necessity of discipline and (2) the notion that these behaviors could be read as a safety concern. For instance, if a child hits another child because they are angry, then that is a safety concern and discipline is implemented. However, if the child hits another child because they "like" or have a "crush" on them, then teachers using facilitative approaches to sexual socialization interpreted these same behaviors as affectionate. Here we see examples of how the same actions get marked differently based on teachers' approaches to sexual socialization, affecting how heterosexual discourses and practices are constructed, normalized, or disrupted in classrooms.

Passive and Restrictive Approaches to Gendered Sexual Socialization

Some structural policies in place at preschools dictate aspects of teachers' sexual socialization approaches, particularly those concerning children's bodies. Teachers instruct children on the importance of keeping their clothes on, particularly their underwear, their bodies covered, and "good touch, bad touch" to keep their bodies "safe" from potential harm such as sexual abuse (see Martin 2014; Martin and Luke 2010).

I found that preschool teachers' sexual socialization approaches to monitoring children's naked bodies varied by children's gender. Across all nine classrooms, teachers did not apply policies regarding "appropriate" sexualized behaviors equally. Teachers utilized passive approaches to sexual socialization with boys; that is, teachers ignored many of boys' sexualized behaviors, including showing their bodies to children. For example, in one classroom at Early Achievers, as a group of 3-year-old boys were playing, a boy pulled down his pants, revealing

his underwear to the boys while making flatulent noises. The teachers were sitting directly across from the boys but did not intervene. In addition to ignoring boys' bodily displays, teachers in all nine classrooms I observed reprimanded girls for commenting on boys' bodily displays. For example, in the other classroom I observed at Early Achievers, a 5-year-old boy was using the classroom bathroom with the door open when a 4-year-old girl, Imani, said, "I can see Willie's bottom." Ms. Donna immediately yelled "Imani" and shook her head in a "no" motion. However, Ms. Donna did not discipline Willie for revealing his body. Here we see one way children's gender influenced teachers' approaches to sexual socialization; Ms. Donna utilized a passive approach with Willie in which she ignored his rule violation of showing his body, but she used a restrictive approach to sexual socialization with Imani by scolding her for "inappropriately" viewing and commenting on Willie's body. These types of behaviors, often referred to as "potty humor," were frequent among girls and boys in the classrooms I observed. However, when girls revealed their bodies as expressions of humor, teachers shook their heads no and informed girls their behavior was inappropriate.

Additionally, in all nine classrooms I observed, when girls showed their bodies to other children, teachers used restrictive approaches to gendered sexual socialization by disciplining girls for their actions. One day upon arrival at a Kids Company classroom to observe, the head teacher, Ms. Sara, said, "It's a crazy day and going outside did not help. Audrey (5 years old) pulled her pants down in block area today to show the boys her body." When associate teacher Mr. Corey arrived, Ms. Sara informed him of Audrey's behavior: "Audrey showed her body twice before you came. We are going to have to call all three families and keep a close eye on Audrey because I know I have her parent conference on Friday but it cannot wait till then. I'm going to have to talk to the boys' parents too" (the parents of the boys who viewed Audrey's

body). A similar situation involving a girl revealing her body occurred at Imagination Center, and the parents of the children involved were also called. These interactions demonstrate how teachers' approaches to sexual socialization were gendered; girls were disciplined by teachers (a restrictive approach) for discussing boys' bodies, and girls received serious sanctions for showing other children their bodies (a call home). However, teachers utilized passive approaches with boys; they ignored boys who showed their bodies, and boys did not receive disciplinary consequences. These gender disparities in teachers' approaches to children's bodily displays have implications for gendered power. Individuals embody gender both psychologically and physically through gendered bodily performances and displays (Butler 1990; Martin 1998). Therefore, teachers' gendered sexual socialization approaches to bodily displays provide one source from which children learn how to use their bodies and bodily displays "to do" gender normatively. Boys learn that gendered bodily displays are a source of status and masculinity, whereas girls learn their bodily displays, at least at the preschool age, are inappropriate and violate norms of feminine modesty (e.g., Connell 1995).

Instances of gendered power frequently occurred at Early Achievers, too. Gender asymmetry is built into heterosexuality and depends on gendered roles and arrangements that perpetuate men's hegemonic status and women's sexual subordination (Ingraham 1994; Jackson 2006). Two boys in a 3- to 4-year-old room at Early Achievers would often chase girls on the playground in attempts to catch up with them so they could slap girls' bottoms:

> Aisha and Desmond were running around the playground chasing each other. Ms. Kathy yelled, "Aisha Smith, no running." Desmond continued chasing Aisha, swinging his arms while attempting to slap Aisha on the bottom. Desmond caught up with Aisha, tackled her to the floor, and began slapping her on the bottom. Three teachers were monitoring the small playground but none of them intervened and Desmond continued to slap Aisha on the bottom until she wiggled away from him, and Aisha ran as Desmond continued to chase her around the playground. (Fieldnotes)

Similar instances occurred six times during my observations in this classroom at Early Achievers. In allowing Desmond to chase, tackle, and slap Aisha on the bottom without disciplinary consequences, teachers utilized passive approaches to gendered sexual socialization. Specifically, teachers' passive approach of ignoring boys' engagement in these behaviors facilitated hegemonic performances of gender and sexuality. Namely, boys were given control over girls' bodies, without their consent, and boys' use of cross-sex touching affirmed and maintained their heterosexuality and masculinity (Pascoe 2007). My findings suggest children are learning about gendered power dynamics, in part through teachers' sexual socialization approaches (often facilitative and passive approaches), and at very young ages (3 to 5 years old); much earlier than previously thought. Research has examined men claiming rights to women's bodies in late adolescence and adulthood (see Pascoe 2007, for one example), but my findings suggest this happens at much earlier ages.

Teachers' Restrictive Approaches to Children's Relationships and Kissing

Kissing (often a peck on the lips or cheek) was the most prevalent sexualized behavior children engaged in; it occurred in 8 of 9 classrooms I observed. In these eight classrooms, children kissed each other playing cooties, to soothe a hurt, playing house, and for many other reasons. At Kids Company and Early Achievers (4 of 9 classrooms total), teachers used restrictive approaches to sexual socialization; they policed kissing and taught children to "save kisses for their family" at home. When a child tried to, or successfully, kissed another child (regardless of the child's gender), teachers in these four classrooms reminded the child of the "save kisses for your family" rule, thereby sanctioning the child's behavior. At Kids Company, a head teacher, Ms. Sara, held a "special meeting" with the children in her class (4- to 5-year-olds) to address kissing:

Destiny kisses Michael while playing in the block area. Ms. Sara sees the kiss and says, "Absolutely not happening here. Save it for your family!" Destiny, "Michael said we're going to get married." Ms. Sara, "We're going to have a group talk about that." Destiny, "Ethan said it too."

Ms. Sara: No one is in trouble, we're just going to talk about it. Come over and have a seat everyone. We need to have a very serious meeting. [The whole class of children came over and sat on the carpet in front of Ms. Sara.] Ok we need to have a serious talk about boyfriend, girlfriend, and married and all this business. Where do kisses go? *Children: Our family.* And is anyone family in this room? *Children: No.* No. So, should you ever be kissing anyone in this room? *Children: No.* Why not? *Children: Because it will share germs.* Yes, because it will share germs. Do you guys like getting sick? *Children: No.* No and we've had lots of people sharing colds. Is it okay to be friends? Yeah, we're all friends, but do you ever hear of anyone at four and five getting married? *Children: No.* No. Worry about that when you're older, but at four and five no married talk or boyfriends or girlfriends. I'm not saying you're in trouble, I'm just saying it's not appropriate. We can worry about being friends, but some mommies and daddies are worried about you playing like that, they think you're too little. When you come to Kids Company your job is to play, is that hard? *Children: No.* No, it's not. So, when you come here [to school] we're going to play with our hands on our self and we're all friends, so we're not going to worry about boyfriends and girlfriends. You all have a long time before you have to worry about that. (Fieldnotes)

Ms. Sara's special meeting about kissing came after a couple instances of teachers catching boys and girls kissing in the classroom and on the playground. After this meeting, Ms. Sara informed me that she decided to hold the meeting because some parents expressed concerns over their children coming home from school and talking about kissing their friends. In this meeting, we see teachers' restrictive sexual socialization approaches in action as Ms. Sara gave children several messages about sexuality: (1) children were not in trouble, but kissing was inappropriate; (2) children were too young to engage in such behaviors; and (3) children's parents made this rule about appropriate behaviors, not Ms. Sara. After this meeting, the class sang a "friendship" song and then went outside for recess. Ms. Sara, through sanctioning children's kissing practices,

attempted to restrict the permeation of heteronormativity and normalization of heterosexual discourses and practices in her classroom. From what I could hear, children in this classroom did not say anything to their peers about the meeting. However, after the meeting, children continued to kiss and have boyfriends/girlfriends (albeit less frequently and more covertly).

Disruptive Approaches to Gendered Sexual Socialization

Teachers across the nine preschool classrooms I observed did not always facilitate or restrict children's engagement in heterosexual discourses and practices. In two classrooms (two different preschools), teachers disrupted heteronormativity on two occasions. At Kids Company, a 3-year-old girl, Holly, was playing with a basket of mermaid dolls quietly by herself. She came up to Ms. Stacey, and with a concerned look on her face said, "They [the mermaids] want to marry each other but they're both girls." Ms. Stacey shrugged her shoulders and replied, "Okay." Holly went back to playing mermaids quietly. Given Holly was not talking aloud I could not tell if Ms. Stacey's response affected her play in whether she decided to allow the mermaids to marry. However, Ms. Stacey's passive response of "Okay" to Holly, while not completely disrupting heteronormativity, opened the door for counter-hegemonic performances of sexuality, allowing Holly to play however she wished without an adult correcting her play and enforcing heterosexuality.

Shortly after the U.S. marriage equality ruling in the summer of 2015, I observed the following interaction at Imagination Center between a group of 5-year-old children while they were waiting to go on a fieldtrip:

Bailey:	"Where's my wedding girl, Marie?"
David:	"You wanna marry Marie?"
Bailey:	"Yeah."
David:	"Girls can't marry girls! Eww!"
Bailey:	"I'm waiting for my wedding girl."
Emmett overheard:	"Girls can't marry girls!"

Bailey to Emmett:	“Girls can marry girls!”
Emmett whispered:	“Homosexual” to Valerie, and laughed.
Marie to Ms. Brittany:	[Marie is fighting back tears] “She [Bailey] won’t stop calling me her wedding girl, and she’s a girl but girls can’t marry girls.”
Ms. Brittany:	“Yes they can.”
Marie paused quietly:	“But I don’t want to marry her. I have a crush on Scott.”
Ms. Brittany replied:	“Okay” and resumed applying sunscreen on children for the fieldtrip.
Bailey sat back down:	“Marie’s beautiful.”
David to Bailey:	“Well, you can’t get married till you’re 30.” (Fieldnotes)

This excerpt illustrates several important aspects of teachers’ roles in sexual socialization, specifically teachers’ ability to utilize approaches that disrupt heteronormativity. This excerpt also provides a window into children’s reproduction of sexuality. The children, except for Bailey, were under the assumption that girls could not marry girls, and they attempted to regulate Bailey’s experiences and sexuality. It is unclear if these children picked up this cultural understanding from media, their families, or somewhere else. However, through responding with “girls can’t marry girls,” children demonstrated their knowledge of heteronormativity: same-sex relationships were not allowed, or same-sex partners could not get married. Additionally, by pointing and laughing at Bailey while whispering “homosexual,” Emmett demonstrated his understanding of the label “homosexual” as an unfavorable social sanction. The children also sanctioned Bailey’s opinions about Marie, presumably resulting in Marie’s upset reaction causing her to seek help from her teacher. Had Ms. Brittany not intervened when Marie approached her for help resolving this peer conflict, or had Ms. Brittany responded with girls cannot marry girls, heteronormativity would have been reified.

Ms. Brittany, perhaps due to the recent court ruling, utilized a disruptive approach to sexual socialization: she engaged in a counter-hegemonic discourse of sexuality by correcting

Marie in front of the other children and stating that girls can marry girls. In responding this way, Ms. Brittany, at least in this instance, disrupted heteronormativity by recognizing the legitimacy of gay marriage, thereby directly challenging the peer group concern that girls were not allowed to marry girls. These data provide a keen snapshot into how children make sense of information that does not fit their developing notions of heteronormativity, and they illuminate how teachers and children uphold and disrupt heteronormativity in peer interactions. In this peer interaction, heteronormative discourses within children's understandings of love and marriage did not prevail; they were disrupted by Bailey, and then ultimately by an adult authority figure, Ms. Brittany. Following the "wedding girl" incident, there was no change in children's willingness to play girl-girl or boy-boy relationships; children continued to hold heteronormative ideas about relationship configurations in their play. However, after this incident Marie continued to talk about Bailey as her "wedding girl," and other children, including David and Emmett, did not make any additional sanctioning comments about Bailey's desire to marry Marie. This conversation highlights one way counter-hegemonic discourses about sexuality were introduced in preschool through teachers' disruptive approaches, and it provides an example of children challenging normative discourses about sexuality through interactions in preschool.

Children's Reproduction of Gender and Heteronormativity

While observing, I witnessed countless examples of children reproducing sexuality and gender through their play and peer interactions. Across all nine classrooms, children frequently played "house" or "wedding" in the house center. This classroom area contained a kitchen set with pretend food, cooking utensils, and dress-up clothes and was predominantly used by girls engaged in house play, although boys would occasionally join in. Children acted out all kinds of imaginative scenarios in the house center, such as pretending they were a family of horses going

on a road trip, or kitties going to the coffee shop, but bending gender roles and norms during house play was not acceptable. While playing house, children appointed gender roles such as mom, dad, baby, or sister. However, children did not allow cross-gender roles; for example, girls could not play the role of dad. When a girl asked to play dad, the other girls would say "no," but children rarely had to say no because children hardly proposed cross-gender roles. Girls frequently got into fights about who was going to play the mother role. In all nine classrooms, teachers frequently intervened in girls' "mom role" conflicts through use of facilitative approaches—teachers would offer children other suggestions for "appropriate" and gendered roles the girls could play. Interestingly, teachers never suggested children allow two moms in their play. For example, one day while observing at Kids Company, 3-year-old Mia approached Ms. Stacey crying and saying a group of girls playing in the house area would not let her play the role of mom, because Holly was already the mom. Ms. Stacey replied, "You could play as the sister, or cousin."

Despite one child having lesbian parents, children across the nine classrooms I observed did not allow for two moms or two dads during house play. The same was true when children played wedding. If two girls were playing wedding, they could both be brides, but children made it clear their female toys were marrying male toys. These rules applied to children's wedding play even after the "wedding girl" incident at Imagination Center. When a girl suggested two girls play mom, another child replied, "No, we can only have one mom," and then offered up a different gender-appropriate role.

Children in all nine classrooms I observed actively constructed and normalized heterosexual discourses and practices with their peers. As previously noted, many children had "boyfriends" or "girlfriends," and they engaged in hetero-romantic behaviors such as kissing or

holding hands. Children, particularly girls, explicitly shared these relationship titles with other children in the class, saying things like, "Landon is my boyfriend." However, with the exception of the wedding girl incident, children never claimed relationship titles with children of the same gender. Yet, girls would often hug other girls and kiss them when teachers were not watching, particularly girls in one classroom at Early Achievers. Girls were not as cautious about kissing boys; they did not check first to make sure a teacher was not watching. Perhaps girls' lack of caution stemmed from some teachers' indifference, or acceptance, of boys and girls kissing. When teachers who did not approve of children kissing (those at Kids Company and Early Achievers who used restrictive approaches and taught children "kisses were for family") caught girls kissing boys, girls seemed unfazed by teachers' disciplinary response; they would smile or blush, and soon re-attempt to kiss the boy. Girls' awareness to scope out their surroundings before kissing other girls demonstrates some notion of heteronormativity: heterosexual practices are expected and "normal" and same-gender practices are different, resulting in increased risk of social labels, or at least increased risk of teacher monitoring or disciplinary sanctions.

Discussion

My analyses suggest preschool teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization affect how heterosexual discourses and practices become constructed, normalized, or disrupted in preschool classrooms. First, my findings point to preschool teachers as socializing agents of gendered sexual socialization. Media and parents play a role in children's early sexual socialization, but preschool teachers' heteronormative understandings, practices, and gendered expectations imbue children's social context of heteronormativity and gender power at early ages, before children enter elementary school. Second, my data demonstrate how children both reproduce and challenge sexual norms and behaviors based on messages they receive about

sexuality from interactions with their teachers and peers. Third, I find teachers discipline some expressions of children's sexuality and gender, while at times allowing for conversations about same-sex relationships. These findings demonstrate ways in which heterosexuality becomes constructed and disrupted through children's interactions with peers and teachers in preschool classrooms.

My data illustrate teachers' active role in children's socialization through demonstrating when and how preschool teachers sexually socialize children. Teachers' use of gendered sexual socialization approaches varied based on children's gender (namely, teachers' approaches to children's bodily displays), but their approaches varied little based on children's race or social class. Each preschool had been operating for 15 or more years and had similar training and licensing requirements, but none of the preschools had official "handbook" policies regarding how to handle gendered or sexual behaviors in classrooms. Teachers' use of facilitative, restrictive, passive, or disruptive approaches to gendered sexual socialization varied substantially across the three preschools I observed. Although we cannot know for sure what caused these three preschools to develop different socialization practices, administrative and ethnographic data suggest level of teaching experience and teachers' age may have affected their socialization approaches. On average, Imagination Center teachers were younger (most in their 20s) than teachers at Kids Company and Early Achievers, who ranged in age from 30 to 50 years old. Extant research finds new teachers during their first few years of teaching are less effective than teachers with more years of teaching experience, especially when examining long-term student outcomes, such as achievement (Herzfeldt-Kamprath and Ullrich 2016). Across the three preschools, level of teaching experience was associated with teachers' sexual socialization approaches. Out of the three preschools, teachers at Imagination Center had the least teaching

experience (three years on average), and these teachers engaged in facilitative approaches to gendered sexual socialization. Teachers at Kids Company had the highest level of teaching experience (17 years on average), and these teachers engaged in the most progressive (and least heteronormative) approaches to gendered sexual socialization. Given these findings, it seems possible that teachers' age and level of teaching experience had effects on their approaches to gendered sexual socialization. Perhaps with age and more teaching experience, teachers come to understand children's sexualized behaviors, regardless of whether they find them to be "appropriate," as simply disruptive to the classroom flow and therefore requiring restriction.

These findings have several policy implications for early childhood education and educators more generally. First, preschools should adopt conscious and explicit policies for how to manage and respond to children's sexualized or "romantic" behaviors. Preschools typically have school wide policies about children keeping their bodies clothed, and occasionally restroom policies about only children of the same gender using restrooms at the same time, but the preschool classrooms I observed did not have any policies for how teachers were to respond to children's sexualized or romantic behaviors. Preschool teachers also receive little to no training on how to manage children's sexualized behaviors in classrooms.

Even in preschools that utilized the most restrictive approaches to sexual socialization, children still engaged in some heteronormative practices with their peers (e.g., kissing and relationships), albeit less frequently and more covertly. These findings demonstrate the importance of teachers actively working to disrupt heteronormativity, which is already ingrained in children by age 3 to 5. I suggest that teachers use every day "teachable moments" in classrooms to educate children about safe and respectful relationships (Martin and Bobier 2017). For example, preschool teachers read children several stories throughout the day. When reading

a book that offers messages about sexuality, such as a child kissing another child without their consent, teachers could pause the book and use that scenario as an opportunity to remind children about the rules of consent. Teachers could say something like, “That was not very nice. That child did not respect the other child’s personal space. We do not get into someone’s personal space or kiss them without asking them first if it is okay.”

Also, teachers need to be provided with free resources or trainings that provide tools for how to respond to children in safe and affirming ways when these issues arise. Preschool is a foundational socializing context in which children are learning about consent and starting to develop a positive self-concept about their bodies and sexuality. Teachers can positively affect children’s self-image by making sure children are told their bodies are good but should be respected (and not shown or touched by others), and by making sure children are not forced or encouraged to kiss other children. Teachers already instruct children to say “stop” or “I do not like that” if they are having a peer conflict, and teachers often have a classroom rule requiring children to keep their hands and bodies to themselves. These classroom rules should be applied equitably, across genders, to sexualized behaviors such as kissing and consent.

Finally, we need to make it easier for preschools to retain the kinds of experienced teachers who seem to do a better job of dealing with issues of gender and sexuality in classrooms. Increasing preschool teachers’ pay and benefits may be a good place to start—preschool workers have extremely high rates of turnover due to the very low pay and quality of benefits they receive for these demanding positions (Cassidy et al. 2011).

Of course, parents play a substantial role in children’s gender and sexual socialization both in the home and in school. In many cases, teachers’ gendered sexual socialization practices were reactive rather than preemptive—they responded to ideas and scripts children brought with

them to school (e.g., from parents and popular culture). Efforts to "correct" heteronormative socialization cannot focus just on teachers, but given the significant amount of time children spend at preschool, preschool teachers play an important and often overlooked role in the sexual socialization process.

It is also important to understand tensions between school and home regarding children's sexual socialization. At Imagination Center and Early Achievers, parents appeared unaware of teachers' sexual socialization practices. These practices were not actively hidden from parents, but parents were not in the classrooms long enough to know what was going on. As a result, parents at Imagination Center and Early Achievers never pushed back, challenged, or attempted to guide teachers' sexual socialization practices. Parents at Kids Company, however, were informed of children's kissing practices and relationships, because their children were coming home from school and sharing they were kissing their boyfriends or girlfriends. These parents expressed concern to the teachers at Kids Company, and the teachers took parents' concerns seriously. So much so, teachers at Kids Company allowed parents to take an active role in children's sexual socialization by guiding the teachers' classroom practices: they imposed new classroom rules that kisses should be saved for family, and preschool children are too young to have boyfriends or girlfriends. These findings have implications for how we think about teacher-parent relationships, as they suggest that parents' awareness, and teachers' willingness to take parents' concerns seriously, can affect how, and in what forms, socialization practices are implemented and enforced in classrooms beginning in preschool. Additionally, these findings contribute to scholarship on social class and parental involvement and intervention in school (e.g., Lareau 2000: Lewis and Diamond 2015). The families at Kids Company (where parents pushed back and tried to guide teachers' sexual socialization practices) were predominately

middle-class, and teachers were highly responsive to their concerns. Middle- and upper-class parents are more likely than lower- or working-class parents to be viewed by teachers as supportive and involved in supplementing and reinforcing the classroom experience at home (Lareau 2000; Lewis and Diamond 2015).

My findings contribute to gaps in extant research by providing a developmental account of gendered sexual socialization, including how heteronormativity is promoted, normalized, and enforced in early childhood before children themselves have a salient sexual identity (Martin 1998; Myers and Raymond 2010). As Martin and Luke (2010:278) argue, "early childhood is a period of intensive gender socialization and given the extent to which (hetero)sexuality informs gender (Ingraham 1994), it is also plausible early childhood marks the beginning of a gendered sexual socialization that leads up to and through adolescence." My data offer insights into what the beginnings of gendered sexual socialization look like, demonstrating how heterosexual discourses and practices make it into children's understandings of their social world in preschool. I challenge discourses that view children as asexual and innocent of sexuality by showing how heteronormativity permeates, and how heterosexuality is presumed (and at times encouraged) by teachers, in even our youngest social beings.

Alarmingly, my data suggest children as young as 3 years old are learning that boys have gendered power over girls' bodies. At Early Achievers, teachers passively gave boys gendered power over girls' bodies, allowing them to chase, tackle, and slap girls' bottoms without reprimand. At Imagination Center, boys were allowed to kiss girls, without a girl's consent, under teachers' justification and assumption of "crushes," or romantic feelings on the part of the boy. Research demonstrates how men claim rights to women's bodies at later ages, but my findings show this form of gendered power is instilled early on in preschool. These early

socialization messages may contribute to the larger rape culture that other scholars have described by instilling messages in children about men's physical power and ability to overcome women's bodies (Pascoe 2007). My data offer examples of how heteronormativity and gendered power begin to shape teachers' delineation of behaviors as appropriate, or in need of discipline or intervention, as early as preschool. My findings suggest children enter elementary school (1) aware heterosexuality is normative, (2) skilled in policing and enforcing heteronormativity in their play and peer interactions, and (3) aware of negative social consequences associated with disrupting heteronormativity.

Finally, it is important to note that students' race and ethnicity affects how school authorities respond to students' gender and sexuality embodiments in later school years (see, e.g., Cohen 1997; Garcia 2009). The preschools I observed were diverse, but I found teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization varied little based on children's race or social class. More work is needed to explore the role of race and social class in young children's exposure to, resistance to, and reproduction of heteronormativity. It may also be important to further examine the impact of preschool quality on teachers' use of sexual socialization approaches and children's reproduction of gender and sexuality. The preschools I observed were average-quality, run-of-the-mill types of preschools. Future research is needed on preschool teachers' sexual socialization approaches in low-quality and public preschools. Finally, future work should interview teachers directly about the training they receive regarding gender and sexuality socialization and their approaches to sexual socialization in classrooms.

Research Ethics

This research was reviewed and designated exempt by a University Institutional Review Board and performed in a way consistent with the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics. Numerous steps were taken to protect participants' confidentiality, including the use of pseudonyms for names of participants and preschools.

Notes

[1] All names in this article are pseudonyms.

[2] The nine classrooms I observed each had one head teacher and one assistant, but occasionally I observed other head teachers when they acted as substitutes, or when classes merged together. Part-time aides' approaches to gendered sexual socialization often mirrored the approaches of the head teacher in that classroom.

[3] All five head teachers observed at Imagination Center were white. The two head teachers observed at Kids Company were white; the two assistant teachers observed were African American. At Early Achievers, one head teacher and one assistant teacher observed were white, and one head teacher and one assistant teacher observed were Filipino.

[4] Children's race was determined based on teachers' perceptions.

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CHAPTER 3

Disciplining Difference(s):

How Inequalities are Reproduced through Disciplinary Interactions in Preschool

Introduction

Disciplinary interactions are a mechanism through which educational inequalities are reproduced in schools (e.g. Betrand and Pan 2013; Ferguson 2000; Grant 1984; Morris 2005, 2007; Morris and Perry 2016; Owens 2016; Tyson 2003; Skiba et al. 2011). Discipline disparities by students' race, gender, and social class exist in rates of suspension, expulsion, and classroom removal from preschool through high school (e.g., Gilliam 2005; Morris and Perry 2017; U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights 2014). Discipline inequality, especially experiences of exclusionary discipline such as suspension and expulsion, have long-term effects on educational outcomes. These long-term effects include time away from the classroom, lower academic achievement, disengagement from school and the student role, contact with the criminal justice system, early dropout, and lower attainment (e.g., Bernburg and Krohn 2003; Betrand and Pan 2013; Crowder and South 2003; Edwards 2016; Morris 2005; Morris and Perry 2016; Owens 2016; Skiba et al. 2014). Examining the early years of students' educational careers can illuminate processes that contribute to discipline inequality and later long-term outcomes. For many children, preschool represents their first experience with an educational institution. Therefore, children's experiences in preschool lay the foundation for later outcomes (e.g., academic achievement), expectations of the student role, and views of teachers and education

more generally (Gansen 2017). How might disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions reproduce race, gender, and class inequalities in preschool?

Discipline and learning, especially discipline and socio-emotional (i.e. self-regulation) skills, go hand in hand in preschool, and both are important for kindergarten readiness and later educational outcomes (e.g., Owens 2016). For example, Owens' (2016) work concludes that four to five year olds social and behavioral skills are significantly associated with later academic achievement and grade retention. She finds that higher levels of behavior problems at age four to five years old are predictive of later behavior problems, and lower educational attainment (including college completion), especially for boys (Owens 2016). Research finds that preschooler's most common behavior problems are noncompliance, aggression, and impulsivity (Chang et al. 2011; Keenan and Walkschlag 2004). Such behaviors are developmental, age appropriate, and representative of young children's process of learning self-regulation (Chang et al. 2011; Campbell 2002; NICHD ECCRN, 2004). Therefore, given preschoolers' young ages (three to five years old) and the developmentally appropriate nature of their misbehaviors we may not expect disciplinary interactions in preschool classrooms to reproduce inequalities through the same processes operating in later years of schooling.

Many behaviors disciplined in middle and high school tend not to be serious infractions (e.g., Morris and Perry 2017). Recent work by Morris and Perry (2017) suggests that disobedient and disruptive behaviors are ambiguous and lend themselves to gender and racial biases and discipline disparities during middle and high school. But, nearly all preschoolers' misbehaviors are ambiguous, inconsequential, and developmentally appropriate. In this article, I draw on ethnographic data from observations in three preschools (nine classrooms total), and interviews with some of the teachers observed. I ask, how might disciplinary practices and disciplinary

interactions in preschool operate in racialized, classed, and gendered ways? Using an intersectional analysis, I demonstrate that despite that most preschool children's self-regulation and behavioral skills are at same stage developmentally, preschool teachers' perceptions of students' misbehavior vary at the intersections of race, social class, and gender. My findings identify routine disciplinary processes that perpetuate inequalities in preschool classrooms. Additionally, I argue that specific types of organizational contexts make certain social statuses more salient (e.g., Tyson 2011). My data suggest that the race, class, and gender compositions of preschool classrooms matter for students' experiences of discipline inequalities. Based on data from nine preschool classrooms, I found that preschool teachers provided more monitoring and discipline to girls from lower-socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds when they were in classrooms that were mostly middle-class. Also, I found that middle-class black boys received more monitoring and discipline than their peers, when they were in classrooms that were majority white but that also had a significant proportion of black students. Lastly, I found equitable discipline in preschool classrooms that were predominately non-white but racially diverse in the proportions of students from non-white subgroups, and that exclusively served low-SES students. My findings suggest that preschool is a foundational site in which educational inequalities are shaped early on through disciplinary interactions.

Background

Intersectionality, Social Reproduction, and School Discipline

The theory of intersectionality is particularly useful when studying educational inequalities (Collins 1990, 1998; Crenshaw 1989, 1991). Intersectionality examines the modes of oppression that result when systems of inequality overlap as a "matrix of domination" (Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991). Collins (1990) theorizes that a "matrix of domination" represents the

hierarchical organization of power relations in society where one's position within the system is based on intersecting systems such as race, gender, and class which result in advantage or disadvantage. Importantly, intersectionality underscores that our social categories not only combine or intersect, but rather these intersections transform the meanings of the categories themselves (Collins 1990, 1998; Crenshaw 1989, 1991). Therefore, an intersectional approach examines how systems such as race, class, and gender mutually construct systems of oppression given that individuals do not experience these systems in isolation (Collins 1990, 1998).

However, reproduction theory typically examines race, class, and gender as analytically distinct social categories involved in the reproduction of educational inequalities (Bowles and Gintis 1976). Instead of viewing schools as "great equalizers," reproduction theory states that schools exaggerate and solidify inequalities that children bring with them to school (Bowles and Gintis 1976). Along with teaching cognitive skills, schools are an important site for imparting moral norms, shaping individual attitudes, and reinforcing social structure (Ramey 2015; Arum 2003; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Durkheim 1961). One way this transmission occurs is through classroom disciplinary practices and interactions. Punishments communicate meanings surrounding values, norms, and identity. School disciplinary practices are based on formal and informal rules and what is disciplined demonstrates the norms of classroom conduct and academic achievement in each school (Lewis and Diamond 2015). Much research shows that despite school rules being written neutrally and said to be applied fairly across all students, they are not. School disciplinary practices permit substantial amounts of discretion and research suggests discretion results in discrimination (e.g., Lewis and Diamond 2015). We also know schools are a central institution for students to learn rules about gender, race, and social class, and that teachers act as socializing agents actively involved in teaching students how they are "to

do" their gender, race, and social class (e.g., West and Zimmerman 1987). In this sense, discipline acts as a means of "moral education" aimed at creating social categories and organizing social life (Durkheim 1961).

School disciplinary practices and policies are also mechanisms of social control. Perry and Morris (2014) argue that exclusionary school disciplinary practices and policies, such as suspension and expulsion, are representations of a culture of social control in US schools. This culture of social control is similar to Foucault's (1977, 1995) concept of "disciplinary society", as aspects of the criminal justice system such as intensive monitoring, regulation of behavior, and punishment have spread to other institutions such as schools. Garland (1990) writes, "…punishment is not a discrete response to certain transgressions, but a system of social order that produces wider meanings and consequences" (1083). Normative judgments guide teachers' perceptions and sanctions of behavioral transgressions, and teachers' perceptions are also biased by students' intersectional social statuses.

Teachers' differential perceptions of students' behaviors and academic performance during elementary, middle, and high school are well documented in the sociology of education literature (e.g., Bettie 2003; Entwisle et al. 2007; Ferguson 2000; Grant 1984; Ispa-Landa 2013; Lewis 2003; Lopez 2003; Morris 2005, 2007; Morris and Perry 2017; Rist 1970; Tyson 2011; Willis 1977). Grant's (1984) influential ethnography examined the race-gender differentiated socialization that black girls receive in desegregated first grade classrooms. Grant (1984) found that elementary teachers are more interested in promoting black girls' social skills than their academic skills. Morris' (2007) research builds on Grant's (1984) work by examining teachers' perceptions of black girls in high school. Morris (2007) found that teachers discipline black girls for expressing assertive behaviors that they perceive as overbearing and loud. Through these

disciplinary interactions, teachers attempted to mold black girls into "ladies" through encouraging traditionally feminine behaviors. However, teachers did not sanction Latina or white girls when they engaged in similar behaviors. Furthermore, Grant (1984) and Morris' (2007) findings illuminate the implications of teachers' differential socialization of black girls as these practices encourage traits such as positivity and quietness that are more likely to restrict than facilitate the academic achievement of black girls. Teachers also hold different perceptions of behavior for black boys than white boys. Research finds that teachers view black boys as more aggressive, threatening, oppositional, and hyper masculine in comparison to their white peers (Ferguson 2000; Lewis 2003; Lopez 2003). Ferguson (2000), for example, found that teachers perceive black boys as threatening which provides teachers a rationale for their frequent surveillance and harsh discipline of black boys (Ferguson 2000). Similarly, Rios' (2011) research demonstrates how education as an institution participates in the "youth control complex" by stigmatizing, monitoring, disciplining, and criminalizing young urban black and Latino boys.

Teachers' race-gender differentiated practices are at times inadvertent. Tyson (2003) conducted an ethnography of two all black elementary schools committed to enhancing black girls' academic achievement through promoting self-affirming learning environments. Despite the admirable intentions of these schools, Tyson (2003) found that teachers convey messages of cultural deviance to black students by disciplining them for behaviors that violate mainstream (white middle-class) cultural norms (see also Ispa-Landa 2013). Schools are structured based on the cultural norms and standards of white middle-class society, and to be successful students' behavior must comply with these norms (Delpit 1995; DiMaggio 1982; Entwisle and Alexander 1993; Lareau 2003; Tyson 2003). This results in cultural discontinuity (or cultural deviance) between minority and low-income students' home life and the structure of schools.

Students' social class also impacts teachers' perceptions of students. Much of this work examines the privileges white students receive in schools (Blau 2003; Fine et al. 1997; Lewis 2001; Morris 2007). For example, some research posits that because most teachers are middle-class, teachers find middle-class students' behaviors more compatible with standards of classroom conduct than low-SES students' behaviors (Entwisle et al. 2007). Additionally, a significant body of ethnographic research finds that boys from low-SES backgrounds perceive school as feminine and therefore often disengage from school and resist academic success (e.g., MacLeod 1995; Rist 1970; Willis 1997). However, much research on the impact of students' social class backgrounds on teachers' perceptions is outdated (for notable exceptions, see Bettie 2003; Morris 2005). Additionally, the majority of extant scholarship on teachers' perceptions of students' behavior and disparate disciplinary treatment examines these processes in the elementary through high school years of schooling.

Less is known about how students' intersectional social statuses impact teachers' perceptions of behavior and use of discipline in preschool. Martin (1998) found that gender impacts how teachers regulate preschoolers' bodies in classroom. For example, she concluded that teachers are more likely to let boys talk without raising their hands and engage in rough play, than girls (Martin 1998). However, Martin's (1998) work does not examine how preschool teachers enact disciplinary policies and distribute exclusionary disciplinary consequences based on students' behavioral transgressions.

Also, recent research based on experimental methods finds that preschool teachers hold implicit racial and gender biases which impact their expectations for behavior and beliefs about best disciplinary practices (Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti, and Shic 2016). Gilliam et al. (2016) tracked preschool teachers' eye gazes while watching videos of preschoolers in which

they were primed by the researcher to expect to observe challenging behaviors. Participants also a read vignette of a preschooler with challenging behavior in which the child's race was inferred by the name given, and background information on the child's social class was randomized (Gilliam et al. 2016). Gilliam et al. (2016) concluded that preschool teachers expect more challenging behaviors from boys, particularly black boys, than girls. Black preschool teachers were also found to hold black boys to higher standards, pay increased attention to them, and to recommend harsher exclusionary disciplinary outcomes (such as suspension or expulsion) for black boys than white boys (Gilliam et al. 2016; for teachers' implicit biases towards black students in later school years, see, for example, Morris and Perry 2017; Forsyth, Biggar, Forsyth, and Howat 2015; Skiba, Michael, Carroll Nardo, and Peterson 2011). These findings are consistent with research on later years of schooling. Research finds that black teachers control and surveillance black students' behaviors more than white students' in order to promote the academic success of black students and eliminate racial stereotypes (McGrady and Reynolds 2013; Morris 2005). However, more knowledge is needed on differences in preschool teachers' one-the-ground disciplinary interactions with children from different intersectional subgroups. Additionally, we know little about how discipline matters for the constructions of preschoolers' intersectional statuses.

Building on the foundational work of scholars such as Ferguson, Grant, Morris, and Tyson, I demonstrate how preschool teachers' perceptions of students' misbehavior vary based on students' intersectional social statuses. I find differences in disciplinary patterns across preschool contexts with varying race and SES classroom compositions. These findings underscore the importance of utilizing an intersectional framework when examining how teachers' perceptions of behavioral transgressions shape their disciplinary practices. Preschools

are structurally different educational contexts than primary and secondary years of schooling. Additionally, preschool students are at a unique stage developmentally as they are learning school rules and how to self-regulate their behaviors accordingly. I argue that preschool is an important site where categories of race, class, and gender are built, differentiated, and made unequal. Preschool teachers' distribution of disciplinary sanctions have significant implications as students' early experiences of discipline inequality impact long-term educational outcomes such as academic achievement (e.g., Owens 2016). My data suggest that beginning in preschool, young children (ages three to five years old) experience inequalities that are, in part, products of racialized, classed, and gendered interactional disciplinary processes embedded within preschool classrooms.

Data and Methods

I conducted ethnographic observations from July 2015 through April 2016 in three preschools in Michigan: Imagination Center, Kids Company, and Early Achievers (all names in this article are pseudonyms). These data are part of a larger study focused on disciplinary practices in preschool classrooms and race, gender, and social class disparities in teachers' use of disciplinary practices. I informed teachers and parents that I was conducting a study about disciplinary practices and their effectiveness in preschool classrooms.

In total, I observed nine preschool classrooms. Preschools were chosen based on their quality and size as these variables are predictors of preschool expulsion (Gilliam 2005; Gilliam and Sharar 2006). Preschool quality was determined based on the Michigan Great Start to Quality rating. All three preschools received four out of five stars through Great Start to Quality and ranged in total capacity from 86-138 children. Early Achievers was the only nationally accredited preschool I observed, and they were accredited through the National Association for

the Education of Young Children. Two preschools (Imagination Center and Kids Company) participated in Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). GSRP is Michigan's state-funded preschool program for children who are four years old with risk factors for educational failure. The curricula and daily schedules of the three preschools were similar. Imagination Center and Early Achievers followed High Scope Curriculum and Kids Company followed Creative Curriculum.

I observed 116 children (primarily three to five year olds) and 22 teachers (15 teachers and seven part-time aides). All but two teachers observed were women, and the majority of teachers (16 out of 22) were white. The education level of teachers observed by preschool was as follows: Imagination Center – four teachers and one part-time aide with bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education, three teachers with Child Development certificates (one to two year degree programs), Kids Company – one teacher with bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, three teachers and two part-time aides with Child Development certificates and, Early Achievers – two teachers with bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education, two teachers and two part-time aides had Child Development certificates. Fifty-two percent of children observed were girls, 48% were boys. There were 22 African American children, 13 Hispanic children, five Middle Eastern children, five Indian children, and four Asian children. The remaining children were white. Teachers at Imagination Center and Kids Company perceived most children as middle-class based on: parent occupation, number of parents in home, number of siblings, tuition cost, and teachers' perception of family's class status. I sat with teachers as they went through student's family information binders and described their students' class backgrounds. Children who attended Early Achievers were identified as low income as they all received free or sliding scale tuition.

On average, I observed two days a week: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30am - 1:30pm; the majority of children's school day, prior to their nap. I observed: five classrooms at Imagination Center - with classroom averages of eight children and one teacher, two classrooms at Kids Company - with classroom averages of 20 children and two teachers, and two classrooms at Early Achievers with 16 children and two teachers in each classroom. The demographics of children at each preschool were as follows: Imagination Center - majority of children were white and middle-class; Kids Company - two-thirds of the children were white, one-third were non-white but majority were middle-class; Early Achievers - most of children were non-white and all were low-SES. The majority of children observed attended preschool all day and at least three days a week. Typically, children arrived between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. and left between 3:30 and 5:30 pm.

I carried a small notebook during my observations, recording extensive field notes, making sure to record direct dialogue when possible (e.g., Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995). In most of the classrooms I observed, teachers introduced me to children as a visitor. In my interactions with children I confirmed my role as a non-sanctioning adult. I was a "reactive observer" (Streib 2011); when children invited me, I sat with them and joined in their play, listening intently to their conversations. Children and teachers quickly began to view me as a normal part of their daily routine, allowing me to write jottings throughout classroom activities or attach myself to small groups and stay near children physically in order to fully observe their behavior. I realized my level of rapport with teachers when they shared opinions about children and parents who got on their nerves, and my level of rapport with children when they shared their opinions about other children, invited me to join in their play, and taught me about classroom jobs or rules. I rotated between holistic observations and more structured techniques in

which I observed one area of the classroom, particular children, or particular teachers (especially if a child was being disciplined). I also followed Thorne's (1993) caution about "big man bias" and observed children for equal amounts of time making sure to not only observe "popular" or active children in the classrooms.

My observations primarily focused on children's involvement in behavior management with peers and teachers, and teachers' use of disciplinary practices; both corrective statements like "don't do that," and consequences like, "Go to the alone spot." Fieldnotes and interviews were coded using the qualitative software program, NVivo. Coded categories emerged from my data and were not predetermined (Glaser and Strauss 1999). While inductively coding the data, GSRP students' interactions with teachers, teachers' dismissal of behaviors, and discipline differences across gender, race, and social class emerged as some of the themes and these are the findings discussed in this paper. I also interviewed nine of the teachers I observed, after my observations were completed. Interviews followed a semi-structured schedule and were coded first by question then analyzed for emerging patterns and themes.

Findings

How do teachers' disciplinary responses to less consequential behaviors such as disobedience and disruptiveness vary by students' gender, race, and social class, in preschool? I observed preschool classrooms with children from a variety of social locations to focus attention on intersecting inequalities and systems of power (e.g., Crenshaw 1991; Collins 1990). The three preschools were similar in quality (each were ranked four out of five stars), but different educational institutions in terms of the demographics of children, teaching practices, cultures, and classroom and administrative dynamics. Specifically, Imagination Center was a predominately white, middle-class preschool; Kids Company was two-thirds white, one-third

non-white, middle-class preschool; and Early Achievers was a predominately nonwhite, low-SES preschool (see Table 3). These differences in students' demographic composition across preschools observed provide a comparative lens through which to examine how power relations shape classroom disciplinary practices in preschool.

As I observed these preschool classrooms, teachers had different ways of managing students' behaviors, particularly disobedient and disruptive behaviors (e.g., not listening or acting impolite). I quickly noticed that discipline was not applied the same way for every student – teachers let some students' behaviors "slide" without disciplinary action, while other children received disciplinary consequences for engaging in the same behavior. Each preschool classroom observed at Imagination Center and Kids Company had a group of students that teachers perceived as engaging in "challenging" behaviors. At these two preschools, the students who received frequent monitoring and disciplinary interactions with teachers were students from easily identifiable subgroups or social categories; low-SES GSRP girls at Imagination Center, and middle-class black boys at Kids Company. In the sections to follow, I demonstrate how teachers' responses to children's disobedient and disruptive behavioral transgressions differed by students' intersectional social statuses and by classroom composition.

A Class Divided:
The Intersection of Social Class and Gender at Imagination Center

In addition to enrolling children whose families paid full tuition, Imagination Center participated in Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) which funded six children's preschool tuition. To participate in the program, children had to be four years old and be at risk of educational failure (measured as coming from a low family income -- below 250% of the federal poverty line). GSRP children at Imagination Center were placed together in a classroom

with children ages four to five years old, all of whom were a year away from attending kindergarten. Ms. Brittany, the head teacher of the GSRP classroom, received special training and external evaluations through the GSRP program, and she held a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. She was a young teacher (in her early 20s) and this was her first year as a head preschool teacher. Ms. Brittany's class size was capped at eight students given the state ratio of adults to children for this age range. However, at the start of the school year only six GSRP students were enrolled. To maximize enrollment, two non-GSRP students were placed in Ms. Brittany's class producing a classroom starkly divided by students' social class; two boys (one white, one Indian) were from upper-class backgrounds and paid full tuition, while six children (three white girls, one white boy, one black girl, one black boy) were from low-SES backgrounds and received free tuition.

During my observations, Ms. Brittany frequently shared her annoyances and challenges with GSRP girls (one GSRP girl was Black, the other three were white) to me and to other teachers. Ms. Brittany often said things like, "Alyssa drives me crazy!" or, "I get so frustrated when those girls don't listen to me." Additionally, in our interview, Ms. Brittany shared that GSRP girls' "pouty," "helpless," and disrespectful behaviors were most challenging for her to manage:

> The GSRP girls' helpless behaviors like, I don't know how to do it type of thing, Hannah with her coat like, "I don't know where that is." But you do know where it is, it is right there. We were getting ready to go outside and she's just standing in front of me. And I'm like, 'Hi.' She's like, 'You need to zip my coat.' I'm like, 'Excuse me!' Like, none of Hannah's behaviors are aggressive or bad behaviors, they are just inappropriate. I said, 'I don't like when you talk to me like that. I don't like when you say, you need to do this because I don't. I will if you ask me nicely, but I don't need to.' Or when girls refuse to do things. When they don't act their age; when they're doing things that toddlers do. That drives me nuts because like Eve and her pouting drives me crazy. It's fine to be upset. It's fine to get really mad, cry, whatever you got to do. But you got to tell me why. I

> don't like the refusing to talk or refusing to clean up. That's really challenging for me.

The behaviors Ms. Brittany identifies as most challenging with GSRP girls are behaviors that many preschoolers exhibit. Schools are structured based on the standards and cultural norms of white middle-class society (e.g., Lareau 2003; Tyson 2003). As such, minority and low-SES students (such as these GSRP students) face a cultural disconnect between their homes and schools, which can result in underachievement if students do not learn and accept mainstream norms (Delpit 1995; Irvine 1990; Lareau 2003; Tyson 2003). Research finds that students whose homes embody these norms have an advantage in school, and are less likely to receive behavioral sanctions from their teachers (Delpit 1995; DiMaggio 1982; Entwisle and Alexander 1993). Additionally, teachers rate children from low-SES backgrounds as having increased levels of behavior problems at the start of kindergarten, than children from middle and upper SES backgrounds (Olson et al. 2013). Ms. Brittany's perceptions provide an account of how students' intersectional social statuses shape which behaviors preschool teachers interpret as "bad", and therefore discipline, versus which behaviors are read as developmental and age appropriate, and therefore mediate.

I also observed countless ways in which Ms. Brittany disciplined GSRP girls differently than other students in her class. Ms. Brittany frequently called out, highly surveilled, and disciplined GSRP girls' disobedient behaviors, such as not cleaning up, not listening, interrupting, or pouting. For example, while several children at Imagination Center were not great at remembering to clean up their table spot after meals, and teachers often cleaned up for them or asked them politely to clean up their spot, Ms. Brittany closely monitored the GSRP girls in her class and made sure that they cleaned up after themselves. Ms. Brittany perceived instances in which GSRP girls did not clean up after themselves as annoying and disobedient.

One day while cleaning up after lunch, Ms. Brittany said to Emily (a white GSRP girl), "Emily your spot is a mess, you need to come back and clean up, we do not clean up after you, you clean up after yourself."

However, when boys (both GSRP and non-GSRP) in Ms. Brittany's class forgot to clean up their spot, Ms. Brittany would often pick up their trash or jokingly yell over to the boy that they had forgotten to clean up. For example, one day during my observations Oliver (a non-GSRP boy) forgot to clean up his lunch spot. Ms. Brittany said to Oliver, "I threw your baggie away, Oliver. You forgot to clean up your spot." Oliver responded, "Sorry." Ms. Brittany cleaned up Oliver's mess, and Oliver was not asked to stop his activity to clean up after himself, unlike how Ms. Brittany responded to GSRP girls' messes.

Meals were not the only time that Ms. Brittany made sure the GSRP girls cleaned up after themselves:

Ms. Heather to Ms. Brittany:	"My friend Tiana is going to be done at art room today because she won't clean up and I've asked her several times."
Ms. Brittany:	"So, she hasn't cleaned up?"
Ms. Heather:	"No."
Ms. Brittany:	"Well she has to, that's not a choice"

[Ms. Brittany grabs Tiana's arm and takes her back to the art room to clean up.]

Here, Ms. Brittany had Tiana (a GSRP, black girl) stop her free play activity and escorted her back into the art room to clean up her spot at the art table. Ms. Brittany frequently reminded the GSRP girls in her class that it was their responsibility to clean up after themselves. However, boys were never asked to leave an activity to clean up after themselves, like Tiana was in the example above.

Ms. Brittany also frequently threatened GSRP girls with having to clean up the classroom or the playground by themselves when they did not listen and follow her requests promptly. One

day while three classes of preschool children were playing on the outdoor playground together, Ms. Amanda said, "Everyone clean up three things." Alyssa (a GSRP girl) was sitting on a rocking toy. Ms. Amanda looked at Alyssa and said, "Alyssa put it away." Ms. Brittany, immediately after Ms. Amanda's request, went over to Alyssa, got down to face-to-face level with Alyssa, and with her hands-on Alyssa's arms asked, "Alyssa, did you hear Ms. Amanda?" Alyssa tried to pull away from Ms. Brittany. Ms. Brittany replied, "We will wait out here until you [Alyssa] put that away." Other children attempted to put the toy away for Alyssa, but Ms. Brittany told them, "No, Alyssa's putting that away." The rest of the children went back inside and just Ms. Brittany, Alyssa, and I were left on the playground. Alyssa quickly put the rocking toy away. Ms. Brittany then instructed Alyssa to pick up three other toys. Alyssa and Ms. Brittany stayed outside five minutes past when the other children went inside so that Alyssa could pick up three more toys.

While GSRP girls in Ms. Brittany's class were frequently held back from activities so that they could finish cleaning up, boys (both GSRP and non-GSRP) were never held back to clean up, and boys received help cleaning up so that the whole class could move onto the next activity together. As Morris and Perry (2017:144) find:

> …the ambiguous and comparatively inconsequential nature of behaviors like disobedience and disruptiveness may create a space for unintentional, implicit racial and gender bias. That is, teachers and staff have discretion to either take official disciplinary action or resolve issues in the classroom, in some cases even letting the misbehavior slide.

Ms. Brittany's disparate disciplinary responses to GSRP girls' disruptive and disobedient behaviors (such as failing to clean up after themselves), versus her disciplinary responses to boys' disruptive and disobedient behaviors demonstrates how students' gender and social class shape teachers' perceptions and disciplinary responses to children's inconsequential behaviors.

Cleaning up after oneself and others is a gendered and classed activity. These findings build on previous work by demonstrating how preschool teachers emphasize traditionally gendered and classed behaviors with low-SES girls, such as cleaning, more so than their academic skills (e.g., Grant 1984; Morris 2007).

Ms. Brittany also used harsh discipline practices with GSRP girls more than other students in her class. For example, one day after lunch a preschool teacher instructed the children to clean up their lunch and join their class on the rug for a story. Ms. Brittany had moved Alyssa to a booster seat with a seatbelt at a table for not listening during lunch. Ms. Brittany went over to Alyssa and said, "Are you ready to get up? Are you going to sit and listen?" Alyssa nodded yes and got out of her booster seat. Not only was Alyssa disciplined harshly for her behavior, she was also disciplined in an inappropriate way for her age – it is against licensing standards to restrain preschool aged children in such ways as a means of discipline.

Ms. Brittany's frequently disciplined GSRP girls differently and severely for other "disruptive" or "disobedient" behaviors. One day, Eve, four years old, was crying in the toddler room. Ms. Brittany sent her to the toddler room for a timeout (which lasted an hour) for pouting and crying during small group. After Eve spent an hour crying behind the toddler room baby gate, peering into her classroom across the hall, Ms. Brittany opened the gate and asked Eve, "Want to talk?" Eve nodded yes and Ms. Brittany took Eve back to her classroom where they went and sat at the writing center table:

Ms. Brittany: "Are you ready to talk? "Eve what's going on, why were you crying?"
Eve: "I didn't want to talk."
Ms. Brittany: "Crying in group just because you want to, is not a reason. Were you upset or mad?"
Eve: "I was frustrated because I wanted to play."

Ms. Brittany:	“You wanted to play during group time and you were frustrated that you had to sit there?”
Eve:	“I want to go to art.”
Ms. Brittany:	“I’m asking about group time, you sat down and pouted when Ms. Heather asked you to stand. That’s why I asked you to go to the toddler room. You missed all of large group and planning and half of work time because you got sent to the toddler room.”
Eve:	“I want to play.”
Ms. Brittany:	“But first we need to talk because pouting for an hour is not okay. I put you over there in the toddler room because that’s what toddlers do, you’re a preschooler, and pouting just because you want to, is not okay. If you are frustrated that’s okay but need you to tell me why so I can fix it. Did you hear what I said? What did I say?”
Eve:	“It’s okay to be frustrated.”

[Eve went back to playing in her preschool room after missing instructional time and spending an hour in the toddler room, essentially in timeout.]

Classroom removal was a frequent way in which Ms. Brittany disciplined GSRP girls’ disobedient behaviors. However, during my observations Ms. Brittany *never* removed boys (either GRSP or non-GSRP) from the classroom for a timeout when they misbehaved.

At Imagination Center, classrooms frequently merged together during large group activities, outdoor play time, and meals. Except for the six GSRP students in Ms. Brittany’s class, most children who attended Imagination Center came from middle-class family backgrounds. As a result, Ms. Brittany also had daily interactions with middle-class girls, and preschool teachers from other classrooms had daily interactions with the GSRP girls in Ms. Brittany’s class. Based on my observations, the GSRP girls did not behave any worse than middle-class girls or boys, or than other GSRP boys. Yet teachers at Imagination Center, including Ms. Brittany, responded differently to middle-class girls’ behaviors than they did GSRP girls’ behaviors, even when they engaged in the same behaviors. That is, teachers gave

GSRP girls more verbal sanctions and disciplinary consequences than their peers. For example, when middle-class girls forgot or failed to clean up after themselves, Ms. Brittany cleaned up after them. Other preschool teachers also disciplined GSRP girls differently during combined classroom activities, especially when these girls engaged in disobedient behaviors. For example, Ms. Amanda, a teacher from a different classroom, frequently had GSRP girls leave large group activities and go to the toddler classroom when they were talking while she was talking. However, teachers frequently gave other children (both GSRP boys and middle-class girls and boys) reminders to be quiet rather than immediate disciplinary consequences when they interrupted teachers or the class activity.

Imagination Center teachers also gave middle-class girls more positive attention than they did GSRP girls. Teachers referred to middle-class girls as "cute" more often than GSRP girls, presumably because they were better groomed and dressed more expensively (i.e., their appearance conformed to middle-class standards of beauty and femininity). For example, tuition paying girls had styled hair and coordinating clothes from stores like Gymboree. Additionally, teachers often allowed middle-class girls to sit on their laps during large group activities and teachers sometimes played with these girls' hair. However, teachers rarely referred to GSRP girls as "cute" and they *never* sat on their teachers' laps during large group activities. At Imagination Center, children's gender and social class impacted teachers' (especially Ms. Brittany's) perceptions and disciplinary responses to GSRP girls' disobedient and disruptive behaviors. Relatedly, the four GSRP girls had more disciplinary interactions with their teachers, than positive and affectionate interactions. These early experiences of discipline inequality have implications for these students' educational outcomes as these experiences may cause GSRP to disengage from school in later years of schooling.

However, Ms. Brittany's interactions with the boys in her class and her comments about their behavior were substantially different than those she directed at GSRP girls. Ms. Brittany's had a different tone of voice with the boys in her class. When asking boys to do something like clean up their meal spot at the table, Ms. Brittany would say thing like, "Julian [non-GSRP] put your breakfast away my love," or "Aiden [GSRP] you are so cute, thanks for helping." Frequently, Ms. Brittany would say to Oliver, one of the non-GSRP boys in her class, "Oliver you're so cute. You just make my day better. You're so smart, kiss your brain." However, Ms. Brittany never used these types of endearments (e.g., "you're so cute") with GSRP girls.

Ms. Brittany also praised the non-GSRP boys and their behaviors as ideal, smart, and exemplar students in her classroom. One day during small group time Ms. Brittany gave each of the children a handful of rocks and instructed the children to sort the rocks into different categories. Oliver said to Ms. Brittany, "I know how to sort! I have yellow with a light yellow because they are the same color." Ms. Brittany smiled and told Oliver, "Just kiss your brain." Ms. Brittany then turned to me, and in front of the other children in her class, said, "He [Oliver] is just so smart." Ms. Brittany then turned to her class of eight children and said, "Friends, I want to show you something. Look at what Oliver did here. He has his yellow rocks sorted in one pile, prickly rocks in the other. So, he's sorting by color and texture. How can the rest of you sort your rocks?" In this excerpt, Oliver engaged in an "ability show" to demonstrate his propensity for the classroom activity and to gain Ms. Brittany's attention (e.g., Tyson 2002). These data substantiate previous findings that teachers reward the behaviors of middle-class students (e.g. Tyson 2003) while contributing that these processes start early in preschool.

Ms. Brittany's disciplinary interactions with GSRP girls versus GSRP and non-GSRP boys demonstrates how students' intersectional social statuses (in this case, their gender and

social class) shape teachers' perceptions of misbehavior beginning in preschool. At Imagination Center, Ms. Brittany felt the need to monitor and correct the behaviors of low-SES girls because she perceived these girls' behaviors as pouty and disrespectful, relative to the middle-class students. These findings contribute to previous research by demonstrating how teachers enforce the comportment and decorum of girls from marginalized subgroups (e.g., Grant 1984; Morris 2007). These early experiences of discipline inequality remove students from instruction and limit their socialization into the ideal student role.

The organizational context and structural division of classrooms at Imagination Center made low-SES students' social statuses more salient. Extant research finds that teachers use social signals and information such as students' dress, skin color, and neighborhood to interpret the class status of their students (e.g., Morris 2005). However, at Imagination Center Ms. Brittany's classroom was explicitly labeled as the GSRP classroom. Additionally, these GSRP students had to be placed in Ms. Brittany's classroom because she was the only teacher at Imagination Center who completed the training requirements of the GSRP program. Therefore, at Imagination center, low-SES students' class status was explicitly known to the teachers and did not require their interpretation. Additionally, because the rest of the students at Imagination Center came from middle-class backgrounds, and not all the students in Ms. Brittany's class were GSRP, students' low-SES social statuses were more salient. In the other preschools I observed, children's intersectional social statuses were associated with different disciplinary patterns. In the next section, I discuss how teachers at Kids Company disciplined black boys' misbehaviors differently than they disciplined girls' and white boys' misbehaviors.

Disciplining Middle-Class Black Boys:
The Intersection of Gender, Race, and Social Class at Kids Company

At Kids Company, I observed two classrooms. The teachers in these classrooms averaged 17 years of preschool teaching experience; the most teaching experience of all three preschools observed. The children at Kids Company came from predominately middle-class families, and about one third of the children in both classrooms were non-white. I observed similar disciplinary patterns across these two classrooms. As such, this section focuses on the younger (three to four-year-old) classroom at Kids Company to highlight how educational inequality is shaped at an early age.

In this classroom, there were two teachers (Ms. Stacey, white; Ms. Monique, black), and there were 19 children total; four black boys, one Middle Eastern boy, three white boys, eight white girls, two Asian girls, and one black girl. The four black boys, Xavier, Josiah, Malik, and Jamal, were friends and spent virtually every day playing together in the block area of the classroom. The four white boys in the class often played with the girls or amongst themselves. Therefore, the black boys and white boys had racially self-segregated peer groups. Despite white and black boys engaging in similar amounts and types of misbehavior, teachers disciplined the four black boys differently than white boys. Since these black boys almost always played together, all four boys received more teacher surveillance and discipline than their white peers, even when some of the black boys were acting appropriately.

Teachers frequently asked children to state their need or request, but teachers did not reiterate or require all children to say please and thank you. For example, one day while observing, Noah, a white boy, put on a play apron and backed up to Ms. Stacey as if to communicate a request from her to tie the apron for him. Ms. Stacey said, “Noah I see you backed up into me. What do you need?” Noah said, “Could you tie this for me?” Ms. Stacey replied, “Oh Ms. Stacey can you tie this for me?” Here Ms. Stacey

emphasized Noah properly articulating his request to her, but she did not require him to say please or thank you. This was typical for interactions between teachers and white boys in this classroom.

However, Ms. Monique and Ms. Stacey regularly emphasized manners with the black boys. One day while the children were eating lunch, Josiah asked Ms. Stacey, "Can you open my applesauce?" Ms. Stacey replied to Josiah, "I'd like you to ask me nicely." Josiah said, "Can you open my applesauce, please?" Ms. Stacey smiled, opened the applesauce and said, "Sure there you go; you don't have to be grouchy." Ms. Stacey's response to Josiah's request is similar to Ms. Brittany's response at Imagination Center when Hannah asked her to zip her coat. The low-SES (GSRP girls) at Imagination Center and the four black boys at Kids Company experienced similar interactions in which teachers verbally sanctioned their decorum. These presumably small micro disciplinary interactions represent seemingly neutral processes of differential socialization in schools that reproduce inequality while obscuring teachers' biases (e.g., Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Tyson 2001).

Ms. Stacey and Ms. Monique also interpreted black boys' tone of voice as grouchy during moments of frustration or conflict. Given the children's age (three to four years old) it was typical (and developmentally appropriate) for children to scream, grunt, or cry in frustration over an activity, toy, or peer conflict. But, teachers interpreted black boys' voices in times of frustration as "grouchy":

> Xavier is playing with toy cars. The car door is stuck and will not open. Xavier says, 'Oh!' in frustration as he attempts to open the car door. Ms. Monique overhears and says, 'Xavier come here. Remember to take breath so you don't have your grouchy voice.'

Ms. Stacey had similar perceptions of black boys' "grouchy" voices during times of frustration:

> Josiah and Noah are playing with a train set. Josiah says, ‘No, stop Noah!’ Ms. Stacey overhears and asks, ‘Josiah, what do you need him to stop doing?’ Josiah replies, ‘Knocking over my train.’ Ms. Stacey says, ‘Okay, so you were really grouchy about that. Next time say stop knocking over my train please.’

The teachers also disciplined the black boys for being overly grouchy. One day during my observations the children made a circle and took turns playing with toy instruments. When the activity was over, Ms. Stacey instructed the children to freeze, put their instrument away and then join her on the carpet. The children got up and started following their teacher’s request. Xavier stood, crossed his arms and frowned. Ms. Stacey asked, “Xavier it looks like you’re feeling grouchy. Are you feeling grouchy?” Xavier replied, “I wanted that drum and I didn’t get a turn with it.” Ms. Stacey said, “Maybe next time you’ll get that one.” Xavier continued crossing his arms and grunted as he slowly walked to put his instrument away. While watching Xavier, Ms. Stacey said, “You’re frustrated Xavier and its okay to be frustrated and sad.” The children were sitting on the carpet and Xavier sat on the carpet quietly grunting and crossing his arms. Ms. Stacey whispered to Xavier, “I’m waiting.” Xavier continued grunting to himself. Ms. Stacey stood up, went over to Xavier, got at eye level with him, and said, “I’m trying to tell what your friends are doing next and I need you to stop grouching out loud. You can now sit here in front of me.” The children proceeded to take turns choosing which area to play in. Xavier attempted to choose instruments. Ms. Stacey replied, “Xavier they are going away, you had a turn. Do you want to take a break in the alone area where it’s okay to be grouchy? Come on, I hear you are grouchy, let’s go to the door [for a timeout] for a little bit.” These types of interactions between teachers and black boys frequently occurred during my observations.

Yet, when white boys in this classroom were frustrated over a conflict, the daily schedule, or they were having a “rough day”, teachers gave white boys space to play alone, and they were rarely disciplined for verbally expressing their frustration. These teachers also never

called white boys' verbal expressions grouchy. Instead, teachers ignored these boys' behaviors and asked other children to ignore them too, even if they occurred during instructional activities that required the attention of all children. For example, one day while the children were sitting on the carpet about to listen to a story, Anthony (a white boy) crossed his arms, pouted his lips and began making grunting noises. One of the girls said, "Anthony isn't ready to listen to the story." Ms. Stacey replied, "Just ignore him." The teachers did not sanction Anthony's behavior. Instead, Ms. Stacey allowed Anthony to stay on the carpet and listen to the story even though he was expressing "grumpy" behaviors.

Throughout my observations, disciplinary interactions between teachers and black boys were a frequent occurrence. Ms. Monique had a separate set of disciplinary practices that she only used with the black boys. Ms. Monique instructed the black boys to go sit by the door for a timeout when they did not listen to her directions. If the boys continued to cry or be "grouchy" at the door, Ms. Monique threatened to send them to the director's office if they did not quiet down:

> Ms. Monique, "Xavier sit down. I'm gonna wait. Josiah go sit by Ms. Shelby, Xavier go sit by door now not listening to my directions and I have asked you several times." Xavier goes to timeout chair by door and begins crying. Ms. Monique says, "I can have you go up front with Ms. Joan [the director] my friends can't hear."

Occasionally, these threats materialized and Ms. Monique removed black boys from the classroom and sent them to the director's office. Throughout my observations, Xavier and Josiah were sent to the director's office four times while not a single other child in this classroom was sent to the office.

Ms. Monique to Xavier:	"What choice are you gonna make?"
Xavier:	"I want to play with these cars."
Ms. Monique:	"It's time to switch."
Xavier:	"No! No!"

Ms. Monique:	"You don't get to tell me no. You can go to the office. That's not gonna work with Ms. Monique."

[Ms. Monique goes to the door and starts to walk Xavier to the office. She turns around and sits on the carpet with Xavier sitting in between her legs. She then proceeds to restrain Xavier by placing her legs over his legs].

Ms. Monique, while restraining:	"Now you don't get to go back to cars."
Xavier screams:	"No!"
Ms. Monique:	"We have to share the car area it's not just for Xavier. Now we're gonna go to the office."

[Ms. Monique takes Xavier out of room to the director's office].

In this excerpt, Ms. Monique excessively disciplined Xavier for disrespecting her authority (by telling her no) through first restraining him – a disciplinary practice outside of licensing standards – and secondly by sending him to the director's office. This was not the only time Ms. Monique used forms of restraints on black boys. I observed Ms. Monique's practice of "holding" Xavier and Josiah on two other occasions:

> Ms. Stacey is reading the children a book as they sit in front of her on the carpet and listen. Ms. Stacey says, "Josiah I need you to stop fidgeting [not sitting still]." Josiah continues fidgeting while Ms. Stacey is reading the book. Ms. Stacey says, "Josiah go sit by Ms. Monique." Josiah goes and sits by Ms. Monique. Ms. Monique pulls Josiah on her lap, holds his shoulders and says, "Josiah stay here. You need to sit still."

A similar restraining incident happened with Xavier:

> Xavier and Anthony are playing in the classroom and run into each other. Ms. Monique sees the incident and says, "Xavier you can put your shoes on. Now you're on my lap [Ms. Monique sits Xavier on her lap and wraps her arms and legs around him to hold him still]." Ms. Monique to Xavier, "I gave you a choice to sit on the carpet and you were running around." Xavier continues wiggling on Ms. Monique's lap. Ms. Monique, "Xavier stop, you are sitting on my lap and I need your body to be still which is why I'm holding you."

While other children could choose where they wanted to go during free play time, Ms. Monique frequently made play choices for the black boys when they were not listening or not paying attention to her requests. For example, Ms. Monique frequently had Malik and Jamal play a game with just her during free "work" or play time. Sometimes, having to play with Ms.

Monique was used as a form of discipline when Malik and Jamal were not behaving appropriately:

> During free play, Jamal and Malik were crawling around the block area playing a game with their toy cars. Ms. Monique came up to the boys and said, “Okay, Malik and Jamal, now I’m going to make a choice for you. Let’s do something together instead of crawling on the floor.” Ms. Monique got two wooden puzzles out and had the boys complete puzzles with her for the rest of free play time.

Sometimes these choices were made before these boys even had the opportunity to demonstrate “appropriate” classroom behaviors. Other times, Ms. Monique made these choices for black boys when they engaged in behaviors she deemed inappropriate. However, when white boys engaged in inappropriate behaviors like crawling on the floor or pretending to be babies, Ms. Monique and Ms. Stacey asked the white boys to stop and play a different activity of the boys’ choosing:

> Anthony and Matthew were crawling around the carpet fake crying and pretending to be babies. Ms. Monique turned to Anthony and Matthew and said, “You guys are not babies, you are preschoolers. How about you pick something else to do?” Anthony and Matthew stood up and proceeded to play with the play food in the house area of the classroom.

Additionally, Ms. Monique frequently escorted (i.e., walked hand-hand) and monitored the four black boys when they engaged in physical behaviors. One day during observations, Emma, a white girl in the class, came up to Ms. Monique and told her that Xavier hit her with a toy. Ms. Monique asked Emma if she talked to him about it. Emma replied that Xavier did not listen to her. Ms. Monique then went up to Xavier and asked, “Xavier, why are you hitting Emma with toys?” Xavier replied, “No I didn’t.” Ms. Monique said, “Well that’s not what she just told me. Don’t do that. It hurts when you do that.” Ms. Monique then held Xavier and Josiah’s hands and said, “What would you two like to do?” Josiah said, “House area.” Ms. Monique replied, “Okay, and I’m going to walk with you. Every time you go somewhere, I’m going. You two need monitoring today.” Through these disciplinary interactions, Ms. Monique intensively monitored

and regulated black boys' bodies as mechanisms of social control (e.g., Foucault 1977, 1995; Garland 1990; Perry and Morris 2014).

Conversely, Ms. Monique used different disciplinary practices with white boys. For example, Ms. Monique often talked through conflicts with the white boys instead of issuing them disciplinary consequences:

> Lily, a girl in the class came up to Ms. Monique crying and said, "Ms. Monique, Matthew [a white boy] just punched me." Matthew overheard and replied, "No I didn't." Ms. Monique said, "Well that is what she's saying and she's crying. Remember hands on your own body. How do you think she is feeling?" Matthew, "Sad." Ms. Monique, "Yes, she is crying. Would you like to say something to her? Are you worried about how she's feeling?" Matthew, "She wouldn't let me have a paper towel." Ms. Monique, "That is your problem Matthew. I want you to figure out words to say on your own for this problem. What would I say if you were hurt? Are you okay? She did say she didn't like that so please don't do that again." Matthew turns to Lily and asks, "Are you okay?"

Ms. Monique even talked out problems with white boys when they engaged in more serious physical behaviors like fighting and punching. On one occasion, I observed Matthew punch Noah (both white) in the arm over a toy conflict. Ms. Monique saw the incident and said, "Matthew use your words. We are not punching friends." Ms. Monique proceeded to get Noah an ice pack for his arm, and Matthew apologized to Noah by saying sorry. Ms. Monique overheard and said, "That is so nice." In this excerpt, we see how Ms. Monique's disciplinary responses with white boys were substantially different than her disciplinary responses to black boys' similar misbehaviors.

Ms. Stacey did not use the same disciplinary practices with the black boys as Ms. Monique. Specifically, Ms. Stacey never sent Malik, Jamal, Xavier, or Josiah to the director's office, restrained them, escorted them, or made other play choices for them. Instead, Ms. Stacey regularly talked with children about their misbehavior or conflict:

> Xavier and Josiah began pulling on a toy back and forth arguing about whose turn it was to play with it. Ms. Stacey came over to them and said, "I hear we have a problem. You are snatching and saying I need it, Xavier." Xavier replied, "I hit Josiah with the car because he was blocking my way." Ms. Stacey calmly replied, "Instead of hitting him what could you say?" Xavier said, "No!" as if to ignore her request to talk out the conflict. Ms. Stacey said to Xavier, "Say I need you to stop blocking me." Xavier then turned to Josiah and said, "I need you to stop blocking me." Ms. Stacey smiled and said, "You learned there was another way you can use your words!"

Ms. Stacey and Ms. Monique frequently talked out conflicts and inappropriate behaviors with the children in their class, especially the boys. But, Malik, Jamal, Xavier, and Josiah were disciplined differently than the other children. Teachers used these practices of behavior modification – reiterating manners, classroom removal to the director's office, restraining, timeouts, teacher monitoring, and teacher directed play choices – with black boys. However, white boys (and white and black girls) rarely experienced these disciplinary practices. Instead, teachers allowed girls and white boys these practices: more leeway with manners, assistance in solving peer conflicts, space to play alone, and timeouts.

Research finds that teachers tend to focus on behavior modification with black students, particularly black boys (e.g., Ferguson 2000; Morris 2005). Ms. Monique strictly disciplined black boys for behaviors she perceived as disrespectful, disobedient, or disruptive, despite the inconsequential nature of most of these behaviors such as expressing "grouchy" frustration (e.g., Morris and Perry 2017). Ms. Monique's disciplinary approaches with Malik, Jamal, Xavier, and Josiah are consistent with previous findings that black teachers hold black boys to higher standards, pay increased attention to them, and recommend harsher disciplinary consequences for black boys than white boys (e.g., Center for American Progress 2014; Gilliam et al. 2016). As Fordham (1996) argues, black teachers engage in these practices with black boys to combat the negative stereotypes associated with black culture (see also, Ladson-Billings 1994; Tyson

2003). Perhaps Ms. Monique focused her disciplinary effort on these four black students because she expected more from them and wanted to provide them the cultural tools necessary to be successful in schooling (e.g., McGrady and Reynolds 2013; Morris 2005; Tyson 2003, 2011). Regardless of the rationale, Ms. Monique's disciplinary efforts and increased surveillance of Malik, Jamal, Josiah, and Xavier, resulted in many disciplinary interactions between these four black boys and Ms. Monique. Additionally, these experiences of early discipline inequality have implications for black boys' educational outcomes as these disciplinary interactions impact their opportunities to learn by removing them from instructional time (e.g., Ferguson 2000; Lewis 2003; Morris 2005).

Early Achievers:

Equitable Discipline in a Racially Diverse, Low-SES Preschool

I only observed discipline inequality by students' intersectional social statuses at Imagination Center and Kids Company. At the third preschool, Early Achievers, the students in the two classrooms I observed were predominately nonwhite (29 of the 32 children observed). Additionally, all the children at Early Achievers came from low-SES family backgrounds as the preschool only served families in need of free or sliding-scale tuition. Consequently, the proportions of students from non-white subgroups at Early Achievers were substantially different than those observed at Kids Company and Imagination Center. This is evident in the racial demographics of children observed at Early Achievers: nine Black, 13 Hispanic, three Middle Eastern, three white, two Indian, and two Asian. Also, two of the teachers I observed at Early Achievers were Filipino and the other two were white.

Discipline was applied more equitably at Early Achievers than it was at Imagination Center or Kids Company. For example, in the three to four-year-old classroom at Early

Achievers classroom rules were reviewed almost daily during morning group time. These rules were directed to all the children even if only one child had recently struggled with following the classroom rules:

> Ms. Christine: "Okay, let's go over the rules of the classroom again. Keep your body and your hands to yourself. No ripping books. Lots of problems with that lately – that's not good. Saw someone do that. It's not nice, we need to be nice to books. We need personal space. These are the rules for everyone. If you have a problem with a friend what do you do? You can talk with your friend and if they are not listening you get a...?"
>
> The children scream: "Teacher."
>
> Ms. Christine: "That's right, you get a teacher."

Also, the teachers in both classrooms at Early Achievers gave children several reminders of appropriate classroom behavior when they misbehaved. Even when children required multiple reminders the teachers in these classrooms continuously reiterated rules with the child or children misbehaving:

> The children are sitting on the carpet with their attention directed to Ms. Donna who is sitting in a rocking chair in front of them. Bianca and Melissa start to argue over their spot on the carpet. Ms. Donna asks Bianca to move to another spot. Marquis and Darius stand up and start walking towards a play center. Ms. Donna says, "Marquis and Darius sit on the carpet." Kennedy is still playing with toys. Ms. Molly tells her to join them on the carpet. Darius and Kennedy have not joined the rest of their class on the carpet. Ms. Donna repeats, "Darius and Kennedy, please join us at the carpet. Everyone hands to self, and sit crisscross applesauce." Ms. Donna asks each child one by one what they did during free play. Naveah and Holly are talking. Ms. Donna says, "I can't hear what Darius is asking because there is talking. Bianca please sit up. Is it polite to talk while others are talking? No. Let's remember we need to be polite. People are telling us what they played and it's important to them so let's listen." Marquis stands up and tries to do a handstand. Ms. Donna say, "Marquis, your friends can't see. Sit down on the rug."

Despite multiple children (both boys and girls) *repeatedly* ignoring their teachers' requests and engaging in disruptive behavior, Ms. Donna and Ms. Molly gave the children several reminders and redirected their misbehaviors without issuing disciplinary consequences such as exclusion from the rest of the group. This pattern was also evident in the other classroom at Early

Achievers. Even when children engaged in physical behaviors like hitting, teachers reminded the child that the behavior was inappropriate and asked them to stop that behavior.

The teachers at Early Achievers also actively mediated children's conflicts with one another. When teachers witnessed a conflict (whether it be a verbal dispute or physical altercation), or a child "tattled" to their teacher about another child's behavior, teachers took the students involved aside and talked them through how to resolve the conflict:

> Ms. Molly: "Maggie, what could you say to Marquis?"
> Maggie: "Can you please move."
> Ms. Molly: "Marquis she said can you please move, so can you move?" [Marquis moves]
> Naveah: "Ms. Molly, Carlos put his hands on me."
> Ms. Molly: "Okay, let's go talk to him. What would you like to say to him?"
> Naveah: "Please don't put your hands on me."
> Ms. Molly: "Carlos, she's saying she doesn't like it when you put your hands on people, so should you put hands on people? [Carlos shakes his head no]. No, you keep your hands on yourself."

Conflict mediation with teacher assistance facilitated student's social skills by teaching children how to talk through their disputes.

Occasionally teachers asked a child to come over and speak with them privately when the child engaged in an unsafe behavior. During these short conversations teachers reiterated the classroom rules, informed the child of why their behavior was unsafe, and then excused the child to rejoin the rest of the class:

> Ms. Christine is standing at the side of the outdoor climbing playgroup equipment. Sofia begins to climb a tree. Ms. Christina, "Sofia, no it's not safe." Isabella and Trinity are running down the side. Ms. Christina, "Isabella and Trinity, it's not safe. Go down the slide on your bottom." Isabella and Trinity start to crawl up the slide. Ms. Rebecca, "Isabella and Trinity come here. [The children walk over to her]. Listen to my words. How do we go down the slide? On our bottoms. It's not safe to crawl up the slide or run down. You could get hurt, okay? Go play." Mateo is standing on top of the Little Tikes Log Cabin. Ms. Tina sees him and says, "Mateo, you need to get down right now! You are not being safe. Come here so we can talk." Mateo walks over to Ms. Tina. Ms. Tina gets down so that she is face-to-face with Mateo and says, "No more, do you hear my words? That is not safe. You could really hurt yourself. Go play safely."

Additionally, at Early Achievers I never observed teachers' using harsh or exclusionary disciplinary practices (such as sending a child to the director's office or to timeout).

> The children are sitting at tables, practicing writing the letter "A". Ms. Tina asks Luca to write the letter A on his paper. Luca stands up and shakes his head no at Ms. Tina. Ms. Tina sits down next to him. Luca has a pouty face and continues shaking his head no. Ms. Tina tells Luca to go talk to Ms. Christine. Ms. Christine asks Luca, "What's the problem?" Luca replies, "I wanna play cars." Ms. Christine, "We're not playing cars right now, it's small group time and you need to do this activity now, then we will play." Luca goes back to his spot at the table, turns to Ms. Tina and says, "I want chalk." Ms. Tina hands chalk to Luca. Luca stares ahead and does not participate in the activity. Ms. Tina turns to Luca and says, "Luca we cannot play with the cars until you practice writing your name and the letter A. If you don't write name or draw something, Ms. Christine will not allow you to play with your car." Luca begins writing his name.

Unlike the teachers at Imagination Center and Kids Company, the teachers I observed at Early Achievers did not utilize exclusionary forms of discipline like timeouts even when children directly disrespected their requests.

In these two classrooms at Early Achievers, I did not observe disciplinary patterns of groups of easily identifiable "bad" children (or those receiving substantial amounts of disciplinary intervention). Also, discipline at Early Achievers was not ad hoc. Discipline was applied equitably across children and across behaviors, even for physical, rude, unsafe, and disruptive behaviors. What is driving these differences in disciplinary patterns and practices at Early Achievers versus Imagination Center and Kids Company? Although I do not know with certainty what is driving these differences in disciplinary interactions, ethnographic, demographic, and administrative data suggest that classroom composition, accreditation, and differences in teacher training may affect teachers' disciplinary practices. Early Achievers was the only nationally accredited preschool that I observed. As part of the accreditation process, preschool centers must comply with several program standards. Such standards include: fostering positive relationships between teachers and children; promoting staff competencies, preparation,

and support through employing teachers with high educational attainment; and offering teachers ongoing professional development training opportunities. Furthermore, perhaps the disciplinary patterns and practices of the Early Achievers teachers observed were equitable because there was greater racially diversity in the racial compositions of these classrooms. Also, because the children at Early Achievers were at high risk of educational difficulties based on their low-SES family backgrounds, teachers may have made a more concerted effort to recognize children's behavioral problems as developmental, and thus work to foster the social-emotional development of their students through equitable and positive forms of discipline to put these students in the best position for later academic success.

Discussion

My data identify routine interactional educational processes in preschool classrooms that impact how discipline inequalities are shaped early. Despite that most preschool children's behavioral and self-regulation skills are at similar stages developmentally, my data demonstrate that preschool teachers' perceptions of students' misbehavior vary at the intersections of students' race, social class, and gender. These findings suggest that the educational context of preschool may not be conducive to all students' academic success. Institutional responses to students' misbehaviors can impact children's ability to succeed. Early experiences of discipline inequality affect students' long-term educational outcomes, such as lower academic achievement, later grade retention, and educational attainment (e.g. Owens 2016). Additionally, poor self-regulation and socioemotional skills impact students' ability to concrete on their learning in the classroom, resulting in lower achievement (e.g., Owens 2016). Therefore, these processes through which teachers interpret (and at times discipline) students' behaviors, even when their misbehaviors are functionally and developmentally the same, demonstrates how

students' gender, race, social class, and classroom context intersect to structure educational advantage or disadvantage as early as preschool. My findings provide examples of how preschool teachers' unequal surveillance and discipline removes students from instruction and socialization of the ideal student role, does emotional harm, and, at times, violates state-level licensing standards for preschool centers.

Whether intentional or implicit, preschool teachers have differential expectations and perceptions of students' behaviors and performances that are associated with students' intersectional social statuses and social contexts. At Imagination Center and Kids Company, low-SES girls and middle-class black boys experienced similar forms of discipline inequality. Perhaps discipline was enacted this way as a mechanism of social control, or because of teachers' views. Regardless, in these schools these marginalized subgroups experienced discipline inequalities, while teachers viewed their peers in a happy light and afforded these children more agency and freedom in their behavioral expressions. The differences if Imagination Center and Kids Company teachers' use of physical contact with their students provides an illuminating example. At Imagination Center, no GSRP girls were allowed to sit on the teachers' lap during group activities, but middle-class girls frequently sat on their teachers'' laps and received positive and affectionate attention during these activities (e.g., teachers playing with their hair, and complementing their cute appearance). However, at Kids Company, Ms. Monique had middle-class black boys sit on her lap so that she could restrain their bodies when they were disrespecting her authority or not behaving appropriately. Therefore, in one context sitting on a teachers' lap is a form of disciplinary restraint, while in another it is a special privilege used as a form of attention, care, and comfort.

School discipline operates as a mechanism of social control in ways that are social group and context specific (e.g., Garland 1990; Perry and Morris 2014). Teachers' normative judgments and perceptions of students (mis)behavior reflect the intersectional ways in which students experience educational inequality. Additionally, the institutionalized and organizational structure of schools are based on the cultural standards and norms of white middle-class society (Tyson 2003). My data emphasize that beginning in preschool, teachers' disciplinary interactions with students convey messages of cultural deviance to students from marginalized subgroups (e.g., Tyson 2003).

For example, At Imagination Center, girls from low-SES families (those in the GSRP program) were viewed by teachers as engaging in more challenging behaviors than their peers. However, the GSRP girls did not behave any worse than "tuition" paying girls or boys, or than other low income (GSRP) boys. I find teachers use more discipline with lower-class girls relative to middle-class students because teachers perceive these girls' behaviors as inherently pouty and disrespectful. Teachers disciplined GSRP girls by having them clean up after themselves, confining them to a booster seat during meals, or placing them in extended timeouts. Previous qualitative research finds that students' social class and race shape teachers' evaluation of their gender performances in elementary through high school, and scholars have found that teachers view low-SES and non-white students' inappropriate and unfavorable gender performances as explanations for their substandard achievement (e.g., Bettie 2003; Ferguson 2000; Ispa-Landa 2013; Lewis 2003; Lopez 2003; Morris 2007; Tyson 2011). My findings suggest that these processes of exclusion based on low-SES girls' gender performances begin in preschool. I find that teachers at Imagination Center may have interpreted GSRP's girls' participation in disobedient and disruptive behaviors as violating standards of white, middle-class femininity,

and therefore warranting of disciplinary sanctions as a form of gender normative accountability (e.g., West and Zimmerman 1987). My results substantiate extant research, finding that disobedient and disruptive behaviors are ambiguous and allow for teacher discretion, which results in disparate disciplinary outcomes (Lewis and Diamond 2015; Morris and Perry 2017).

At Kids Company, teachers' differential expectations and perceptions of behavior were associated with unequal disciplinary treatment of black boys relative to other students. Teachers used disciplinary practices such as reiterating manners, interpreting tone of voice as grouchy, classroom removal to the director's office, restraining, timeouts, monitoring, and teacher directed play choices with black boys. However, white boys (and girls) rarely experienced those teacher practices. Research on the racialization of schooling, finds that black students' gender performances are viewed as inferior and unconducive to school success as societal norms regarding gender-appropriate behavior are based on standards of white, middle-class, femininity and masculinity (Bettie 2003; Ferguson 2000; Ispa-Landa 2013; Lewis 2003; Lopez 2003; Morris 2007; Tyson 2003). My study contributes to extant scholarship on racialization within schooling through identifying how routine disciplinary interactions in preschool classrooms may play a crucial part in laying the foundation for cumulative racial advantage and disadvantage in schooling (Diamond 2006; Lopez 2003). The teachers at Kids Company watched black boys more than other children, and the teachers were less likely to ignore, or let black boys' misbehaviors slide, even when their behaviors were inconsequential (e.g., Gilliam et al. 2016; Morris and Perry 2017). My results advance research on racial inequality in school discipline through identifying routine educational processes that result in racial discrepancies in how discipline is applied even for similar misbehaviors (Ferguson 2000; Morris and Perry 2017; Morris 2005; Skiba et al. 2002). Racial gaps in non-cognitive skills and school readiness exist

when children enter kindergarten, and exclusionary discipline is harmful to students' educational achievement (e.g. Downey, von Hippel, and Broh 2004). Therefore, middle-class black boys' experiences of discipline inequality in preschool may lay the foundation for later experiences of racial inequality in educational outcomes.

There has been a call for more research examining how the social organization of schools, including the demographic composition of students, contributes to inequalities in disciplinary practices and outcomes (e.g., Edwards 2016). Recent work by Edwards (2016) examines how the racial compositions of schools impact racial inequality in disciplinary outcomes in high school. Edwards (2016) finds that increases in the percentage of black students enrolled corresponds with school contexts in which black students experience more behavioral sanctions and discipline inequality. Additionally, she finds that black students are most likely to experience discipline inequality in schools that are homogeneous white or black (Edwards 2016). My findings contribute to this body of work by complicating the relationship between the racial composition of school contexts and black students' experiences of discipline inequality, in preschool. Contrary to Edwards (2016) findings, my data suggest that black boys experience unequal disciplinary sanctions in preschools that that are majority white, but that also have a significant proportion of black students in their racial composition. This disciplinary pattern of racial discipline inequality was evident at Kids Company which had a racial composition of two-thirds white students, and one-third non-white students. Additionally, my data suggest that boys of color, including black boys, experience less disciplinary sanctions for their behavior in preschools that are predominately nonwhite. These equitable disciplinary patterns were reflected at Early Achievers in which 91% of the students observed were non-white. Discipline inequalities in preschool are significant as these differences lay the foundation for future

inequalities in educational outcomes (e.g., Edwards 2016). Future work should examine how students' intersectional social statuses and school contexts shape students' experiences of discipline inequality throughout their educational careers.

Consistent with previous research, I find racial disparities in discipline are not the result of differences in the rate or severity of misbehavior by students of different races (Skiba and Williams 2014; Tyson 2003). Black students are more likely to be disciplined than white students, even when both black and white students display similar behaviors (Hirschfield 2009; Skiba et al. 2002). My data also illuminate how students' social class impacts teachers' perceptions of their behavior and teachers' allocation of discipline. Even when non-GSRP girls (and boys) at Imagination Center, or white boys (and black and white girls) exhibited the same behaviors as GSRP girls, or middle-class black boys, they were disciplined less frequently and less harshly for their behavioral infractions. My findings suggest that children's behaviors are disciplined in gendered, racialized, and classed ways in preschool. These early experiences of discipline inequality in preschool have significant implications for students' educational outcomes including, resistance to schooling, grades and academic achievement, and attainment (e.g., Betrand and Pan 2013; Morris 2005; Morris and Perry 2017; Skiba et al. 2011).

Given my data are based on classroom observations in high-quality private (i.e., for-profit) preschools, I am unable to determine how interactions between students' race, class, and gender impact their experiences in public preschools. We know that racial disparities in preschool disciplinary outcomes such as suspension and expulsion are especially prevalent in public preschools (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights 2014). Therefore, more research is needed on the routine disciplinary processes that reproduce educational inequalities in public preschools. Future work should also track students' experiences of discipline inequalities

longitudinally to examine the long-term impact of disciplinary sanctions on students' perceptions of schooling, and their overall academic achievement as they progress through later years of schooling. Educational reforms should offer trainings for early childhood educators on how to identify implicit biases and apply disciplinary consequences in an equitable manner to all children. This research highlights the importance of examining discipline inequalities through an intersectional framework, examining how students' race, class, and gender collectively influence disadvantages or advantages in schooling (see, also Morris and Perry 2017).

Research Ethics Statement

This research was reviewed and designated exempt by a university institutional review board and performed in a way consistent with the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics. Numerous steps were taken to protect participants' confidentiality, including the use of pseudonyms for names of participants and preschools.

Notes

[1] 61 percent of children spend an average of 33 hours per week in childcare (Laughlin 2013).

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CHAPTER 4

"Following the (Gendered) Child":

How Children's Gendered Behaviors Become Enhanced, Extended, and Built in Preschool

Introduction

Boys exhibit more behavioral problems at the start of kindergarten than girls (DiPrete and Jennings 2012; Owens 2016). Students' early acquisition of social and behavioral skills are significantly associated with later educational outcomes (e.g., achievement and retention). Through utilizing data from the Early Child Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-1999, DiPrete and Jennings (2012) find that girls lead boys by nearly 0.4 standard deviations at the start of kindergarten, and that the gap in social and behavioral skills between boys and girls is considerably larger than the gap between children from poor and non-poor families or the gap between black and white children. Relatedly, Owens' (2016) work finds that boys' higher levels of behavioral problems at age four to five years predict lower educational attainment (including college completion), and later behavior problems, more so for boys than girls. These gender differences in children's social and behavioral skills at the start of kindergarten must have roots somewhere. Perhaps these gender differences are produced at home, but more and more children are beginning their educational careers in preschool (Laughlin 2013). Therefore, where do gender differences in children's social and behavioral skills at the start of kindergarten come from? What produces these differences? The literature has one clue – preschool discipline.

Preschools are *explicitly* gendered educational contexts and several components of the organization of preschools are not even seemingly gender neutral. Gender operates as a salient organizing principle in preschool as boys and girls are often defined in contrast to one another during classroom interactions and practices (Martin 1998). Such practices include calling boys and girls to line up in separate groups and classroom greetings such as "good morning boys and girls." Defining young children in such ways in preschool evokes automatic sex categorization and activates gender as a background identity in all preschool interactions (Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Thorne 1993). Schools are a type of gendered organization, and schools are a primary institution for the construction and enforcement of gender (Acker 1990; Williams 1993; Pierce 1995, Pascoe 2007; Hallett 2007). Schools structure individual identities through establishing institutionalized gender arrangements of power that reinforce gender difference. Acker (1990:147) states that, "gender is a constitutive element of organizational logic, or the underlying assumptions and practices that construct most contemporary work organizations." Organizational logic often seems gender-neutral at first glance. But, gender operates as a substructure that underlies theories and messages contained in organizational logic (Acker 1990). Acker (1990) tells us to look for the gendered substructure that guides gendered practices in organizations. The gendered substructure of the organizational context of preschool classrooms can be hard to see since so many practices are explicitly gendered in preschool. However, I identified the gender substructure in the use of developmental tenets institutionalized in the curricula and teachers' practices within preschool classrooms. This developmental tenet upon which the gender substructure of the organizational context of preschool classrooms rest is referred to as "following the child."

High quality preschool curricula call for teachers to take children "as they are" and to work to accommodate children's behaviors and interests in the classroom (Thomas and Chess 1977; Wardle 2007). Preschool curricula that "follow the child" are much better for children's social-emotional development and cognitive development than preschool curricula focused on having children sit still and learn their letters (Klein and Knitzer 2006). Therefore, many curricula call for preschool teachers to be responsive teachers, and to "follow the child's" needs and interests. The goal is to accept and manage children's individual temperaments and needs, not to make children conform to one standard of good behavior (Thomas and Chess 1977; Wardle 2007). As such, preschool classroom environments and teachers' interactions must "fit" each individual child. To do so, teachers must recognize that all children have different learning needs, and that children need to be allowed to pursue their interests in the classroom with support from their teachers.

This practice requires active participation on the part of preschool teachers. Teachers must observe children's interests, plan and adjust classroom activities to provide children with activities that they are interested in, and respond to children's interests with enthusiasm. Some potential classroom learning needs that are unique to each individual child include opportunities to learn through: bodily movements, fine motor activities, problem solving, social skills, writing, alone time, imaginative play, and hands-on materials. In the abstract, each child has unique learning needs, given that not all boys and all girls are the same. For example, one boy might learn best through social activities involving acting out imaginative play scenarios with other children, while another boy may learn best through arts and crafts in which they are able to illustrate and construct their interests. Therefore, "following the child" is a neutral "objective"

developmental theory, absent of gender, racial, and class differences or biases. How do teachers "follow the child" in everyday practice?

In this paper, I examine how the seemingly "gender-neutral" developmental tenet of "follow the child" guides the organizational logic and gender substructure of preschool classrooms. Using ethnographic data from observations in three preschools (nine classrooms total), I find that the everyday practice of "following the child" is not gender neutral in preschool classrooms. I argue that teachers assume a gendered child, and therefore "follow" a *boy* or a *girl*. I call this gendered practice of preschools, "following the *gendered* child."

Extant research on gender socialization in educational contexts focuses primarily on how gender is constructed through interactions. For example, Martin's (1998) ethnographic work identifies how children's bodies become gendered through interactions with their teachers and peers in preschool. Martin (1998) mentions hidden curricula as driving these gendered interactions in preschool, but she does not mention where these practices come from, and she does not discuss how institutional practices embedded in the structure of preschool reproduce the gender system, and subsequently, gender inequality. Gender as a social structure is constructed through multiple dimensions (Acker 1990; Risman 2004). Interactions are an important site for the construction of gender, but educational interactions are often based on institutionalized practices, such as "follow the child." My study fills this gap in the literature through examining institutionalized practices that (re)produce gender inequality in preschool. In this paper, I examine three research questions: 1) What are the mechanisms by which institutionalized practices embedded in preschool affect gender inequality? 2) How are classroom practices that derive from developmental theories implemented in gendered ways? And, 3) What are the unintended consequences of these institutionalized practices? I find that in preschool, boys

perceived behavioral "needs" are accommodated and receive less disciplinary responses from teachers, while girls receive increased disciplinary intervention for their behaviors. My data suggest that preschool teachers foster a masculine learning environment in which teachers implement gendered curricular accommodations (e.g., wrestling, gun play, and heavy work) aimed at fostering, rather than curbing, boys' perceived unchangeable behavioral needs such as roughhousing and physical play. Additionally, I find that there is gender inequality in the distribution of resources in preschool classrooms. Specifically, in the institutionalized gender-specific curricula in these classrooms, as well as the unequal disciplinary treatment that boys and girls receive for their inappropriate behavior in preschool classrooms. I argue that "following the child" results in teachers utilizing gendered practices which differentially prepares boys and girls for kindergarten, and may be at odds with the learning environments and expectations placed on boys in primary and secondary years of schooling.

Background

Ridgeway (2011) identifies gender as an organizing frame for social relations. Masculinities and femininities are defined in a complementary and hierarchical relation and features such as violence and authority -- masculinity, and compliance -- femininity, help to maintain a hierarchical relationship between genders (Schippers 2007; Ispa-Landa 2013). As gender theorists argue, gender is a structure embedded in all aspects of social life, even aspects that seemingly are not gendered (Acker 1990; Martin 2004; Ridgeway 2011; Ridgeway and Correll 2004; Risman 2004). Therefore, gender is a socially constructed stratification system (Risman 2004). Social structures shape individuals, but individuals also shape social structure (Risman 2004). Many scholars have also identified gendered practices that compromise gender

as an institution (e.g., Acker 1990; Risman and Correll 2004; Martin 2004; Ridgeway 2011; Thorne 1993; West and Fenstermaker 1995; West and Zimmerman 1987).

Organizations are prominent gendered structures in our society (Acker 1990). "To say that an organization, or any other analytic unit is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (Acker 1990:146). As Acker (1990) theorizes, organizations are gendered at multiple levels (individual, interactional, and institutional), and organizational routines support gender inequality and difference. For example, institutionalized means of maintaining divisions of labor, or divisions of allowable behavior, are one interacting process through which gender occurs in organizations (Acker 1990). The organizational contexts of schools contain embodied agents who function as gender enforcers. For example, teachers and peers are significant gender enforcers who hold individuals accountable for appropriate displays of gender (e.g., Pascoe 2007). Institutional discourses, practices, and interactions in schools affirm gender differences as central to daily life. For example, Pascoe (2007) in her ethnographic work in a High School found that school rituals such as dances and pep rallies operate as spaces to perform and police gender and sexuality.

Preschools are key organizations in the lives of young children. High quality preschool has been found to decrease inequality gaps at the start of kindergarten (Barnett 1998; Guralnick 1997; Heckman and Krueger 2004). Preschool teachers work to prepare children for kindergarten by prioritizing children's socioemotional skills so that children gain behavioral control over their emotions and can express their feelings appropriately. Classroom disciplinary interactions have a significant role in the transmission of gendered expectations for appropriate behavioral dispositions within classrooms. Through disciplinary interactions with their teachers, students

learn teachers' expectations for their behavior and the realm of behaviors and activities that best facilitate academic success. A large focus of preschool and kindergarten is spent preparing children for the role of student through teaching children classroom routines and how to follow teachers' requests (Gracey 2008). These self-regulatory skills that children learn in preschool provide the foundation for their academic success and performances throughout their educational careers (Matthews et al. 2009). Students' self-regulatory skills impact their educational outcomes and school performance as research has found that strong self-regulation skills are a predictor of higher year-end achievement in kindergarten (Blair 2002; Matthews et al 2009; see also, Howse, Calkins, Anastopoulos, and Shelton 2003; McClelland, Morrison, and Holmes 2000). With more and more children beginning their educational careers in preschool, and these significant gender gaps in behavioral skills at the start of kindergarten, it is imperative that we examine gender gaps in boys' and girls' educational experiences in preschool as these encounters during the early years of schooling provide the foundation for later educational outcomes (e.g., Buchmann, DiPrete, and McDaniel 2008; Gansen 2017; McLeod and Kaiser 2004; Pallas 2003; Shanahan 2000).

Gender Gaps in Educational Outcomes

There are gender gaps in educational outcomes in the United States. For example: boys receive more discipline than girls; boys have lower grade point averages; boys are more likely to be held back a grade or referred for special education services; boys have higher dropout rates; and boys have lower college enrollment and completion rates, than girls (e.g., Buchmann et al. 2008; Buchmann and DiPrete 2006; Halpern 1997; Kleinfield 2009; Zill and West 2001). Specifically, according to Census data from 2015, men compromised 50% of students enrolled in

ninth grade in 2014, but received 48% of high school diplomas, 43% of college enrollees, and were awarded 40% of the bachelor's degrees (U.S. Census Bureau 2015).

There is also evidence that gender gaps in educational outcomes begin in preschool. For example, boys are five times more likely than girls to be expelled from preschool (Gilliam and Shahar 2006). Moreover, DiPrete and Jennings (2012) in their analysis of ECLS-K data, found that boys are more likely than girls to be retained (or held back a grade) by the start of 5th grade, and that girls are much less likely to be retained in kindergarten than are boys. Their data suggest that the gender differences in retention rates at the end of first grade are explained by gender differences in boys' and girls' social/behavioral scores, and in their reading scores (DiPrete and Jennings 2012). Social and behavioral skills have strong effects on teacher-rated academic achievement, especially at the start of elementary school, and data indicates that boys enter kindergarten with higher levels of behavioral problems than girls (e.g., Owens 2016). Girls have better social and behavioral skills and perform better on standardized tests at the start of kindergarten than boys (DiPrete and Jennings 2012). Additionally, advantages in social and behavioral skills are positively correlated with teachers' evaluation of students' academic achievement at the start of elementary school (DiPrete and Jennings 2012; Ladd et al. 1999; Lin, Lawrence, and Gorrell, 2003).

Sociologists argue that boys' problems in schools are embedded in the construction of masculinities. As Morris (2011) states, sociological gender theory illuminates "boys academic trouble as a social problem, but rooted in the social construction of masculinity rather than institutional discrimination against boys" (92). Several ethnographic studies have examined the relationships between masculinities and boys' orientation towards schooling (e.g., Best 1983; Foley 1990; Thorne 1993; Mac an Ghaill 1994; Sewell 1997; Gallas 1998; Ferguson 2000;

Skelton 2001; Dance 2002; Newkirk 2000; Salisbury and Jackson 1996). For example, Willis (1977) and McLeod (1995) found that working class boys in high school construct masculinity in opposition to school and therefore do not take schooling seriously. Others argue that boys and girls are socialized differently and engage in different behaviors which creates differential effects on their educational experiences and outcomes (Mickelson 1989). Specifically, Mickelson (1989) states that girls are socialized to be good and obedient in following teachers' requests, and that this feminized role that girls are socialized into facilitates girls' academic achievement as these behaviors are conducive to academic success. On the contrary, boys are socialized to be independent, physically active, and resistant to that which is perceived as feminine such as following teachers' requests and valuing schoolwork (e.g., Orr 2011; Morris 2011). These differences in "socialized characteristics" (Morris 2011) are said to give girls an advantage in classrooms (Mickelson 1989).

During early childhood, children learn the expectations placed on them based on their gender, and their role within social structures, such as classrooms (Bourdieu 1984; Dumais 2002; Orr 2011). Through their participation in gendered activities, girls are taught their place in the gendered social structure of classrooms as docile, nurturing, and passive, while boys are taught to be assertive, independent, and active students (Orr 2011). These differences in the gender socialization of boys and girls create disparities in students' classroom experiences and the potential for gendered differences in students' academic success (e.g., Dumais 2002). As Orr (2011) finds, the "socialization experiences of girls may prepare them better for school by providing cultural capital and behavior dispositions (habitus) that are beneficial in school environments, and help form positive attitudes about school" (280). However, boys are socialized into a gender role in which their activities (or gendered practices) are at odds with

classroom environments (Mickelson 2003; Orr 2011). This creates the potential for boys to engage in behaviors that result in increased disciplinary sanctions and lower grades from their teachers than girls (e.g., Orr 2011). While previous research finds that cultural skills such as students' behavioral dispositions can impact teachers' evaluations and students' educational achievement, little research has examined students' acquisition of capital in the foundational early years of schooling (Bourdieu 1984; Lareau 2003). Additionally, we know that gender gaps in social and behavioral skills are evident at the start of kindergarten and that these gender gaps impact students' academic success throughout grades k-12th (e.g., DiPrete and Jennings 2012). But, we have very little qualitative data to demonstrate how and why these gender gaps in boys' and girls' acquisition of social and behavioral skills exist. And, we know less about how institutionalized classroom practices impact students' educational experiences in gendered ways.

Data and Methods

Between July 2015 and April 2016, I conducted intensive participant observations, and interviews with teachers observed in three preschools in Michigan: Imagination Center, Kids Company, and Early Achievers (all names are pseudonyms). Participant observations in preschool classrooms and interviews with teachers observed are appropriate methodological approaches for examining these research questions. These qualitative methods illuminate how institutionalized curricular and disciplinary practices are implemented "on-the-ground" in preschool classrooms, as well as disparities that result from the application of these practices in classroom interactions. I informed teachers that I was conducting a study about disciplinary practices and their effectiveness in preschool classrooms. Preschools were chosen based on their quality and size. Preschool quality was determined based on the schools ranking in Michigan's Great Start to Quality, and all three preschools received 4 out of 5 stars. The preschools ranged

in total capacity from 86-138 children. Early Achievers was nationally accredited and Imagination Center and Early Achievers also participated in Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program – a state funded preschool program that provides free or reduced tuition for children who are four years old with risk factors for educational failure. Imagination Center and Early Achievers followed High Scope curriculum, while Kids Company followed Creative Curriculum (see Table 1 for study overview; Gansen 2017a).

I observed a total of 116 children (primarily three to five year olds), and 22 teachers (15 head teachers and seven part-time aides. Most the teachers were white (16 out of 22) and all but two of teachers observed were women. At Imagination Center, four teachers and one part-time aide held bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education and three teachers held certificates in Child Development (one to two-year degree programs). At Kids Company, one teacher had a bachelor's degree, while three teachers and two part-time aides held certificates. Finally, at Early Achievers, two of the teachers observed had bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education, while two teachers and two part-time aides had certificates in Child Development. I observed 22 African American children, 13 Hispanic children, five Middle Eastern children, five Indian children, and four Asian children. Fifty-two percent of the children I observed were girls, 48% were boys. Teachers at Imagination and Kids Company identified most of their students as middle-class based on students' family information binders, including: parent occupation, number of parents in the home, number of siblings, tuition cost, and teacher's perception of family's class status. Children at Early Achievers were identified as low income as they all received free or sliding scale tuition.

I observed two days a week on average: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30am-1:30pm. This is much of children's day in preschool prior to their nap. I observed five classrooms at

Imagination Center, each with eight children and one teacher per class. At Kids Company, I observed two classrooms with 20 children and two teachers in each classroom. Lastly, at Early Achievers I observed two classrooms with 16 children and two teachers in each classroom. At Imagination Center, most children were white and middle-class. At Kids Company, two-thirds of the children were white, one-third were non-white, but the majority were middle-class. The children at Early Achievers were mostly non-white and all low-SES. Most children at these two preschools attended all day and at least three days a week.

While observing I carried a small notebook and took extended field notes, recording direct dialogue when possible (e.g., Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995). I was very cognizant of my positionality in the classroom. While observing, I was a “reactive observer” (Streib 2011) and when children invited me, I would join in their play and listen to their conversations. I also took on a middle manager role (Gansen 2017b; Mandell 1988) during observations. A middle manager role is when the researcher seeks to establish rapport with teachers and children simultaneously so as not to only align themselves with one group of participants in the field. Enacting this middle manager role was important as it allowed me to avoid over positioning myself with teachers or children. I gained rapport with teachers and children through assisting children in small tasks such as tying shoes or zipping coats that both teachers and children interpreted as helpful. I also avoided disciplining or reprimanding children for their behavior. As a young white woman in “college” observing children’s classroom behavior, it is possible that at first children perceived me as a teacher with authority. In the beginning, if I were near children when they were breaking a class rule such as taking a toy from someone else or fighting, children would stop, pause to see if I would intervene, and then when I did not intervene in their dispute or discipline them, continue to engage the behavior or activity. I realized how much rapport and

trust I had gained with teachers when they shared their opinions about children and parents who got on their nerves, and my level of rapport with children when they shared their opinions about other children, invited me to join in their play, and taught me about classroom jobs or rules. My observation approaches varied between holistic observations, and structures technique where I observed particular children, particular teachers, or one area of the classroom (especially if a disciplinary interaction was taking place). Perhaps my identity as a woman aided my rapport building by allowing me to be viewed as an "ideal carer" by the teachers and children in the classrooms I observed (Bailey 2017). I also followed Thorne's (1993) caution about "big man bias" and made sure that I did not only observe active children in the classrooms.

During observations, I primarily focused on children's involvement in disciplinary interactions with their peers and teachers, as well as teachers' use of disciplinary practices. Field notes were coded using qualitative software, NVivo. Coded categories emerged from my data and were not predetermined (Charmaz 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1999). Some of the themes and most commonly used codes that emerged as the findings of this paper were: classroom curricular accommodations, teachers' disciplinary practices, and disciplinary interactions between teachers and students. I then sub-coded these codes based on teachers' responses to the child's behavior, by the gender of the child. For example, the code "classroom curricular accommodations" was sub-coded by type of accommodations (e.g., gun play), and then into two separate codes (boys and girls) to identify how teachers' applied curricular accommodations similarly and differently based on the child's gender. I also conducted interviews with 11 of the teachers that I observed. These interviews were conducted at the end of my observations in each preschool. Interviews followed a semi-structured scheduled and lasted an hour, on average. I coded interviews first by question and then analyzed the questions for emerging patterns and themes.

Findings

"Following the child's lead" or interests is a prominent tenant of child development and a practice that most educators utilize in preschool. This principle stems from the concept of "goodness of fit" which child psychiatrists Alexander Thomas and Stella Chess coined in 1977. In classrooms, goodness of fit refers to a compatibility between the child and the expectations and demands placed on them by their teacher (Thomas and Chess 1977). The idea is that if teachers structure their classrooms and adjust their interactions with students to produce a goodness of fit it will result in a healthy social development for young children. To produce a goodness of fit teachers must meet the individual needs of each child. The concept of "goodness of fit" has influenced many additional tenants of early childhood instruction. Several high quality preschool curricula have adopted principles that stem from the concept of goodness of fit (such as "following the child") and these practices are said to result in a healthy development and positive educational outcomes for children.

However, I find that preschools follow the *gendered* child in everyday practice. Through my observations in three preschools (nine classrooms total), I find that children sometimes bring gendered behaviors and interests (such as gun play or wrestling) into the classroom, and teachers respond by following children's observed or perceived gendered behaviors and interests. Teachers follow the gendered child by reinforcing gender norms (and stereotypes) through accommodating boys' supposed innate gender differences in behaviors and needs during disciplinary interactions. Specifically, in taking children "as they are" and "following the child's interests", I find that preschools foster a masculine learning environment in which teachers implement gendered curricular accommodations (e.g., wrestling, gun play, and heavy work) aimed at fostering, rather than curbing, boys' perceived unchangeable behavioral needs such as

roughhousing and physical play. In everyday practice, this process operates like this: child presents difficult behaviors or behaviors that are unacceptable in preschool, teachers must intervene regarding the child's behavior, teachers intervene by following the child's (gendered) interests through taking the child "as they are" and accommodating, or allowing, the child to engage in their gendered behaviors and gendered interests, thus solving the child's behavior problem in the classroom while simultaneously reinforcing gender inequality and difference. Through examining gender as a constitutive element and substructure embedded within the organization of preschool, my analyses illuminate institutionalized practices and interactional gender processes that reinforce gender inequality in preschool classrooms.

Gendered Curricular Accommodations

In the three preschools I observed, teachers followed what they perceived to be the learning needs of boys in their classrooms through implementing gendered curricular accommodations in their classrooms, such as wrestling, gun play, and heavy work. These accommodations were aimed at fostering, rather than curbing, preventing, or disciplining, boys' behavioral "needs" and interests (e.g., roughhousing or physical play). At Imagination Center, to accommodate teachers' perception of boys' "need" to be physical with one another and play rough, Ms. Connie, the preschool director, incorporated "safe" wrestling into the curriculum. As a result, teachers at Imagination Center encouraged and allowed boys to wrestle safely. Ms. Heather discussed the practice of wrestling:

> We had a large group activity where we practiced roughhousing and boys sat around gymnastics mats and we picked two boys roughly the same size and let them roughhouse. We talked about body language, how if you're friends are smiling, that means they're having a good time, if you're friends are not smiling, what does that mean? And we talked about where it's appropriate to put your arms and your hands, like do you ever touch somebody's head? And they practiced roughhousing and from that moment on all we had to say was, 'Look at his face' and they would look and be like he's not smiling. He doesn't like this,

> okay, and then they would go play without that person or they would change their movement. That was a challenging behavior at first because we didn't know how to make it work for our school, because when you see boys roughhousing or when they're hurting or being very physical you have to say, 'You need to stop, you need to go find something else to do,' but they don't want to do something else, that's where boys are developmentally. So, we had to come up with an adjustment and make it so they still get that aggression out -- but in a safer way, obviously.

I frequently observed boys wrestling at Imagination Center. When outside on the playground, boys wrestled by tackling each other and rolling around on the grass. Teachers watched nearby and only intervened if the wrestling moved into punching, in which case they would inform boys that they were no longer allowed to wrestle for the day. In the excerpt above, Ms. Heather discusses the rationale behind implementing safe wrestling in the curriculum at Imagination Center. Specifically, she states how incorporating wrestling accommodated boys' perceived "need" for a physical outlet to release their aggression, through allowing boys to engage in behaviors that would not usually be allowed in the classroom. However, girls were not taught how to wrestle in this way and they were disciplined by teachers when they engaged in these types of physical behaviors.

Imagination Center also implemented a gendered curricular practice based off boys' interests through permitting boys to safely engage in what I call "licensed" gunplay. Ms. Heather initiated a conversation about gunplay in our interview:

> We've taken a couple classes at the HighScope Curriculum conference about how to handle boys and guns in the classroom because obviously you don't want guns, but unfortunately that's what boys see, that's what they are taught, that's kind of just in boys' makeup sometimes. What we found worked best for us was, you cannot play guns at school if your guns are pointed at a person, and you have to go into the art room and they have to construct something. We printed out a target and hung it in the hallway and they also had to get a gun license, which is on the computer with their picture and they had to go to Ms. Mary and get the gun license. And that's the only time they could play guns was during work time if they were shooting at the target and they had their gun license. If they were using their gun inappropriately, Ms. Mary would take their gun license away and they were done because you can't use your gun if you don't have a gun license. Those

> challenging behaviors are sometimes a way for us to think about how can we incorporate what boys need and still make it work for our school and still make sure they're learning something in the process. It's our job to see how we can still allow them to have that creative freedom and that play, but make it safe and make them smart about it (Interview, Ms. Heather, Imagination Center).

In this excerpt, Ms. Heather discusses Imagination Center's formal policy and practice towards licensed gunplay. However, I never saw gunplay implemented this way during my observations. Instead, participation in gunplay (often largely dominated by boys) was allowed by teachers without disciplinary consequences. While accommodations were made for boys with wrestling and gunplay at Imagination Center, no curricular accommodations were made for girls in any of the preschools I observed. Rather, boys' gendered behaviors were allowed and therefore privileged by teachers, even when these behaviors would otherwise be considered violating classroom rules (e.g., no hitting). However, there are several things girls might have needed an accommodation for; for example, working through peer conflicts with other girls. Arguments between girls were very common across the classrooms I observed and girls would frequently argue with one another about who got to play a certain role (usually the role of the mother) or what activity to play next. Despite the frequent occurrence of these conflicts teachers rarely helped girls talk out or resolve these conflicts. Instead, teachers separated girls or had them move to another activity when conflicts emerged.

Likewise, Kids Company and Early Achievers offered curricular accommodations for boys, but not girls, again privileging boys' behaviors under the guise of this is what boys "need." At Early Achievers and Kids Company a couple of boys were allowed to go on walks with teachers, or help another teacher in a different classroom when they were having a hard time paying attention to the classroom activity or when they were disrupting the rest of their class. Near the end of my observations at Kids Company, teachers shared how they were in the process

of getting the materials for a "heavy work" activity for boys. The teachers told me they learned about heavy work in an early childhood training course. Heavy work consisted of asking boys to carry jugs that were different weights from one classroom to another when boys needed a distraction or some time away from the classroom. One day, Ms. Stacey shared her excitement with me about the soon-to-be implemented heavy work activity:

> I'm excited because we just ordered the weighted jugs and I'm going to go observe another classroom at a different school that is using heavy work. My understanding is we will put some jugs in the older classrooms and then the front office too and when we have a boy who's having a hard time focusing, getting frustrated, or needing a break we will ask him to take the jug up to the front desk, that way he'll be able to use up some of that physical energy that boys have and it won't seem like anything bad or like, 'you're in trouble.'

Ms. Stacey's view of boys as having physical energy in need of release, impacted what she saw as appropriate curricular practices and accommodations, leading to the implementation of the heavy work activity for boys at Kids Company.

Sometimes teachers utilized boys' gendered interests and needs for bodily movement when attempting to redirect a boy's inappropriate behavior. For example, in one classroom at Kids Company, the teachers had boys do pushups when they were not listening, physically fighting, or being aggressive with their friends:

> A group of boys in the four to five-year-old room began picking each other up and tackling each other to the floor. Ms. Sara saw the boys engaging in these behaviors and said, 'Okay, I want you boys to stop picking each other up. Do you want to get hurt? Remember how Jake got hurt?' The boys ignored Ms. Sara and began pushing one another. Ms. Sara immediately said, 'Okay boys, come over here and let's do some pushups. Five of them.' The boys left the area they were playing in and began doing five pushups in the middle of the classroom (Fieldnotes, Kids Company).

Ms. Sara frequently had boys do exercises when they engaged in physical behaviors with one another. In addition to pushups and jumping jacks, Ms. Sara would also have children take turns pushing against her hands. Ms. Sara also frequently brought a standing punching bag into the

classroom for the boys to hit and kick during free play time. When I asked Ms. Sara about these practices, Ms. Sara stated that, "Boys need outlets like exercise, pushing, and the punching bag to get all of their physical, boy energy out." However, in Ms. Sara's classroom, girls were not instructed to engage in these forms of exercise when they displayed physical behaviors.

Across the nine classrooms I observed, teachers implemented gendered curricular accommodations to allow boys to engage in physical activities, based on either the child's interests or teachers' perceptions of boys' gendered interests. Despite some of these behaviors violating classroom rules, teachers provided boys permissible outlets to engage in aggressive behaviors. Some of these accommodations like safe wrestling, licensed gunplay, and heavy work, were established to find a "creative" way to handle challenging behaviors that boys exhibited in the classroom (e.g., physical roughhousing). Each of these accommodations were established based on the assumption that these types of behaviors were in boys' "nature" and therefore "needed" expressions of behavior. Even boys who did not enter these classrooms with interests in physical activities (e.g., wrestling) were encouraged by their teachers to wrestle, and some of the boys who did not roughhouse at the start of my observations were frequent wrestlers by the end of my observations – that is, by teaching boys how to wrestle safely, teachers produced boys who roughhoused. Therefore, the teachers I observed did not just follow the "child" – they followed the *gendered* child. In following the gendered child, teachers privileged boys' behavioral "needs" through their accommodations. However, no accommodations were made for girls – that is teachers never instructed girls to do push-ups when they engaged in physical behaviors. Instead, girls were disciplined for disrespectful and rule-violating physical behaviors. In the next section, I discuss teachers' gendered disciplinary responses to boys' and girls' "inappropriate" behaviors and conflicts with peers in the classroom.

Gender(ed) Disparities in Disciplinary Treatment

Following the gendered child leads to gendered disparities in disciplinary treatment during disciplinary interactions. By disciplinary interactions, I am referring to any time a teacher redirected a child's behavior, responded to a conflict between children, or punished a child or children for their behavior or actions (e.g., disciplinary verbal sanctions like, "We do not do that"; or exclusionary disciplinary consequences like timeout). During my observations in these nine classrooms, I witnessed several gender disparities in the disciplinary treatment that boys and girls received from their teachers. Across all nine classrooms, boys received fewer disciplinary consequences than girls when they engaged in disruptive or inappropriate behaviors. Teachers disciplined girls for interrupting, ignoring their teachers and classmates, or for telling teachers no. When girls participated in these behaviors teachers disciplined girls with a timeout or threat of exclusion. For example, one day at Imagination Center the teacher, Ms. Heather, called the children to come sit in a circle for their large group activity. Alyssa (one of the girls in the class) continued sitting in her chair and did not join the circle. Ms. Heather walked over, grabbed Alyssa's shoulders, and guided her to the circle. While doing so, Ms. Heather said, "Alyssa, I don't like when you ignore me that makes me crazy!" Ms. Heather then instructed the children to pick a shape on the rug and stand on it. Peyton (another girl in the class) replied, "Katie is not in our class!" Ms. Heather quickly stated, "Actually she is Peyton. Take off the bossy pants. You are not a teacher." Ms. Heather disciplined Alyssa for ignoring her request to sit in a circle for large group. Additionally, Peyton received a disciplinary sanction for interrupting Ms. Heather and acting "bossy."

In addition to verbal sanctions, girls also received disciplinary consequences when they engaged in behaviors such as interrupting, ignoring, or telling their teachers no. One day during

observations at Kids Company, Amelia (a girl in the class) was excluded from the rest of her class, and given a timeout, for singing while her class was preparing to go for lunch. After Amelia's timeout, Ms. Stacey discussed Amelia's behavior with her:

Ms. Stacey:	"Amelia, come here. I had to excuse you. What happened?"
Amelia:	"I wasn't being good."
Ms. Stacey:	"You weren't being good or you weren't being a good listener?"
Amelia:	"I was trying to sing."
Ms. Stacey:	"There's a time to sing. What were we trying to do?"
Amelia:	"Lunch."
Ms. Stacey:	"If you are singing you can't go to lunch, so if you're disrupting, Ms. Stacey is going to excuse you to timeout."

However, teachers' response to girls' ignoring and interrupting was drastically different than their response to boys' engagement in these behaviors. When boys ignored their teachers, teachers first made sure that boys understood what their teachers were saying or asking of them. Teachers would get face-to-face with boys often while holding the boys' face or arms and ask them if they heard their teachers' request. For example, one day while the children were about to line up to go outside Ms. Monique said, "Girls, listen while I'm talking. Boys, look at me I want to make sure you can hear me." On another occasion during observations at Kids Company, Ms. Stacey instructed the children, "Hands on your lips. It is Ms. Stacey's turn to talk and you can't hear what I'm saying when you are talking." Xavier (one of the boys in the class) did not put his hands on his lips, and instead continued playing with toys. Ms. Stacey looked at Xavier and said, "Xavier, did you hear my words?" Across the three preschools I observed, girls received disciplinary sanctions or consequences when they ignored or interrupted their teachers. When girls participated in these types of behaviors, teachers frequently told girls (while disciplining them with timeouts), that they should not have to ask them multiple times. However, boys

received reminders, and teachers made sure that boys were listening or heard their teachers' request, before they received disciplinary sanctions or consequences.

If a teachers' reminder did not result in a boy following the teacher's request, teachers would often redirect the boy to another activity instead of giving them a disciplinary consequence like timeout:

> Early achievers, morning circle time. Ms. Donna is sitting in a rocking chair going over the daily schedule for the children who are sitting on the carpet in front of her. Marquis begins laying down on the carpet. Ms. Molly, who is sitting on the carpet with the children says, "Marquis." Marquis continues laying on the floor. Ms. Donna chimes in, "Marquis, no, sit up." Marquis and Carlos (a boy sitting next to Marquis) begin pushing one another. Ms. Molly says, "Marquis stop. Scoot over away from Carlos and stop pushing each other please." Marquis and Carlos continue pushing each other. Ms. Molly says, "Marquis come here please." Marquis comes and sits by Ms. Molly. Ms. Molly offers Marquis the option of sitting on her lap. Marquis sits on her lap and stays there for the duration of circle time.

While Marquis received a disciplinary sanction from his teachers to stop pushing he did not receive a disciplinary consequence like exclusion from circle time for engaging in physical behaviors and disrupting the class activity. Instead, Ms. Molly redirected Marquis' behavior by allowing him to sit on her lap – a special privilege that only Marquis received.

Even when boys talked back when their teachers gave them a reminder, boys rarely received disciplinary consequences for not following their teachers' instructions:

> [Imagination center, art room.] Ms. Heather says to Gavin, "Gavin, you need to pick up that paper and give it back to Willow." Gavin replies, "You have told me twice." Ms. Heather: "That is because you're not turning your ears on." Gavin, "You didn't have to tell me another time, you are teasing me." Ms. Heather, "I did have to tell you another time because you're not listening. You need to turn your ears on." Gavin growls at Ms. Heather, and Ms. Heather watches by as Gavin continues to ignore her request to pick up the paper. Ms. Heather does not give Gavin a disciplinary consequence.

Throughout my observation boys received more reminders than girls before they were disciplined by teachers. One day when a couple of boys were not listening to Ms. Amanda's

requests during small group, Ms. Amanda reminded the boys to listen. Kayla (a girl in the class) said, “The boys weren’t listening.” Ms. Amanda replied to the whole class, “Sometimes boys need reminders, boys are like that.” These gender disparities in teachers’ disciplinary responses to children’s behaviors, provide a clear message to girls (and to the whole class), that girls are expected to be good and obedient students in preschool classrooms, while boys are given leeway and reminders of teachers’ requests and expectations of “good” classroom behavior.

Teachers’ disciplinary responses to children who ignored their requests even differed when boys and girls engaged in the same behaviors at the same time. For example, one day during clean up time at Kids Company Ms. Stacey informed the class that it was time to clean up and that she did not want to get her “cranky” voice out. Instead of cleaning up, a couple of boys (Xavier and Josiah) continued wrestling on the rug, while a couple of girls (Emma and Ella) continued playing with their toys. Ms. Stacey said to the two girls, “Emma, you can go to the door for a timeout. You are excused. You will get your own bucket of toys to clean up after everyone else is done cleaning. Ella, you are also excused. Go to the book area for timeout and you will get your own bucket to clean up, too.” Ms. Stacey then looked at Xavier who was continuing to play with toys and said, “Xavier, right now we are cleaning up.” Josiah continued playing and Ms. Stacey took his toy from him and instructed Josiah that it was time to clean up. In this excerpt, despite both groups of boys and groups of girls ignoring their teachers’ request, girls received disciplinary consequences (i.e., timeouts), while boys received reminders regarding their teacher’s request, instead of disciplinary consequences.

Girls and boys were also disciplined differently when they participated in physical or aggressive behaviors such as hitting, pushing, or kicking. When boys engaged in these types of physical behaviors, teachers frequently talked through conflict resolution with the boys involved

in the dispute. After talking out the boys' conflict, teachers sometimes asked boys to take a break (have alone time) or to play in a different area. However, boys rarely received disciplinary consequences (such as timeouts) for participating in these types of behaviors. One day at Kids Company I witnessed the following exchange after a boy began crying because another boy hit him with a dinosaur:

Ms. Stacey:	Matthew I see you have a sad face. [Matthew is crying]
Matthew replies:	Noah threw a dinosaur at me.
Ms. Stacey:	Noah, why did that happen?
Noah:	Matthew was in my way so I took it and tried to block him.
Ms. Stacey:	You were playing here and trying to block Matthew so you hit him. So, Noah, do we throw toys? When you threw the dinosaur what happened?
Noah:	It hit Matthew.
Ms. Stacey:	And Noah how would that make you feel? What do you need to do?
Noah to Matthew:	Sorry.
Ms. Stacey:	Sorry doesn't fix the problem. You need to check with him to make sure he is okay.
Noah to Matthew:	You okay?
Matthew:	Yes, please don't hit me with toys.
Ms. Stacey:	How are you going to play with each other? Can you each play with your own dinosaur? Noah, next time how are you going to work it out with Matthew so that hitting doesn't happen? If there is a problem do you hit him?
Noah:	Play together and say sorry.
Ms. Stacey:	Well before the problem you have to talk to him and use your words to solve the problem. If you need help solving the problem what could you do?
Noah:	Tell a teacher.
Ms. Stacey:	Yes, and we can come help you work it out

When boys had conflicts with one another that resulted in a physical altercation such as pushing or hitting, teachers almost always talked through conflict resolution with the boys instead of disciplining the boys involved. Even when a boy was acting aggressively towards other children (boys and girls) teachers often ignored the boys' behavior or offered a brief verbal sanction to the boy without initiating a disciplinary consequence:

> Early Achievers, recess time. The children are running around the playground equipment. Steven is running around and hitting other children. Ms. Tina says to Ms. Christine, “Steven hit everyone!” Ms. Christine stopped Steven, looked him in the eyes, and pointed her finger at him while saying, “No.” Steven smiles at Ms. Christine and shakes his head in a “yes” motion. Ms. Tina says to Steven, “Look at Ms. Tina, no hitting okay, Steven?” Steven replies, “Okay, Ms. Tina.” Ms. Christina smiles, turns to Ms. Tina and mockingly replies, “Okay, Ms. Tina.” The two teachers laugh and Steven continuing playing with the other children.

However, in the nine classrooms I observed, teachers had different disciplinary responses when a boy and a girl engaged in a physical altercation over a conflict. At Imagination Center, when girls had a conflict with a boy (typically resulting from the boys’ physical behavior) teachers often asked other children in the class what the girl could do instead of crying or tattling to their teacher:

> Skylar is crying. Ms. Connie, “What’s going on?” Skylar, “I want Landon to stop hitting me.” Ms. Connie, “Landon, why are you doing that?” Landon, “I was practicing karate.” Ms. Connie, “So we were doing karate to Skylar and she asked you to stop lots of times?” Landon nods yes. Ms. Connie to Skylar, “If Landon keeps doing something and he can’t stop, what could you do?” Skylar, “I don’t know.” Ms. Connie, “Let’s ask a friend. Jessica, any ideas?” Jessica shakes her head no. Ms. Connie, “Peyton, what could we do?” Peyton, “Say stop it please.” Ms. Connie, “Good, and if he continues to do it then walk away.”

Additionally, teachers at Imagination Center often redirected girls to their peers for help solving their non-physical conflicts with boys:

> Erin yells, “Stop it Chase!” Ms. Mary looks on and says to Erin, “Are you solving the problem?” Erin shakes her head no. Ms. Mary replies, “Well you could be.” Erin says, “Ms. Mary, I don’t want him to put bubble in mouth.” Chase shaking head no. Ms. Marry, “I want to think about how to solve problem, Erin.” Ms. Mary to the whole class, “Hey friends, Erin has a problem. She wants Chase to stop doing what she’s doing. What could she do?” Two friends say walk away. Maya says, “Please stop blowing bubbles.” Ms. Mary replies, “These are all great ideas Erin. Now you have some options on how to solve your problem.

However, unlike boys, girls were immediately scolded and almost always “excused” from activities or sent to timeout when they participated in physical behaviors. One day while observing at Early Achievers, Isabella and Destiny (two girls in the class) were shoving each

other back and forth. Destiny began crying. Ms. Christine immediately said to the girls, "Isabella you can get up and go to the door. You need space today that is not okay, and Destiny you need to use your words. Crying doesn't do anything." Instead of receiving teacher or peer assistance in solving their physical altercation, Isabella was immediately punished with a timeout at the door and Destiny was verbally sanctioned for crying instead of communicating her feelings verbally.

The teachers I observed disciplined boys' and girls' physical behaviors differently, even when injuries resulted from their actions:

> [Imagination Center, free play time, block area]. Gavin is screaming and crying. He has a bloody lip. Ms. Amanda comes over to Gavin and says, "Lets go take care of your face, then tell me what happened." Ms. Amanda begins cleaning the cut on Gavin's lip while Gavin continues sobbing. Ms. Amanda says, "Gavin, Gavin, you are okay. Do you think you can tell me what happened?" Gavin lets out, "Adrian." Ms. Amanda, "Adrian, come here." Adrian immediately comes over to Ms. Amanda and Gavin and says, "Gavin threw that [white PVC pipe] in front of Julian's garage, so I threw it at him." Ms. Amanda replied to Adrian, "Instead of throwing something at Gavin, what could you do instead? You could say stop. Look at Gavin's face, and his lip. [Gavin cries louder)] You are okay Gavin. Adrian, do you need to take a break from those toys?" Adrian shakes his head no. Ms. Amanda to Adrian, "You are big. You use your words, and Adrian if you are gonna be rough with those, you are gonna be done. Show me you can handle playing with them." Ms. Amanda took Gavin to get an ice pack, and Adrian went off and continued playing.

In the classrooms I observed, boys were rarely disciplined for physical behaviors, even when their behavior resulted in injury to another child. However, girls were frequently excused from activities or given a timeout for responding to conflicts with physical behaviors, both when their behavior did and did not physically injury the other child involved. One day I observed the following altercation at Kids Company in which Matthew and Emma were fighting over a pirate ship, pulling it back and forth:

Matthew to Emma:	"Stop it!"
Emma:	"You're not the one that got it, I am."
Matthew:	"I'm stronger than you! Stop!"

Emma: "I got this first." [Emma hits Matthew in the head with her hand. Matthew cries].
Emma to Ms. Monique: "Matthew's pulling on this (pirate ship) but I had this first so I hit him."
Ms. Monique: "That's not okay! Gonna have you leave carpet. That's not okay Emma, what should you say?"
Emma: "Sorry Matthew, are you okay?"
Matthew: "I'm not okay!"
Ms. Monique: "When friends are using things you need to use your words and say can I use that. Emma you're gonna come off carpet because you were hurting friends, make a different choice."
[Emma is crying walking hand in hand with Ms. Monique. Ms. Monique sits Emma in the alone spot for a timeout].

Here we see how teachers drew a hardline for girls around physical behavior. This differential treatment of boys and girls during disciplinary interactions involving physical behaviors gives girls a clear message that physicality is not okay. However, boys are given the message through their teachers' disciplinary responses that as long as you talk through your behaviors it is okay for boys to engage in these types of physical behaviors.

Gendered Responsibilities

In all three preschools I observed, girls were disciplined by having to clean up an area by themselves when they were not following their teacher's instructions to clean up. At Kids Company, teachers frequently dumped out a bin of toys, or had a child dump out a bin of toys, for a girl to clean up when they did not listen to their teachers' request. For example, one day during clean up time I witnessed this interaction:

Ella: "I'm tired."
Ms. Monique: "But it's time to clean up and if you don't finish it you'll stay in with Ms. Monique."
Violet: "We don't want to."
Ella: "We're tired."
Ms. Monique: "Ms. Monique is tired too but I'm still working. I'm gonna make you a pile (Violet) and you (Ella) a pile [dumps out two bins of toys] and then you two will not be playing in here anymore because you don't

> like to clean up." [Violet is slow to start cleaning up her pile].

At Imagination Center and Early Achievers, girls were also frequently held back from the next activity so that they could finish cleaning up, while boys could move onto the next activity on time. Additionally, in all nine classrooms I observed, boys received help cleaning up and they were never forced to clean up without teacher assistance. Instead, when boys were cleaning up slowly or had not finished cleaning up before the next activity, teachers often asked other children to help boys clean up so that the class could transition to the next activity. Thus, in all three preschools I observed, teachers had different expectations for boys and girls "responsibilities"; teachers expected girls to be responsible for cleaning up, but teachers expected boys to require assistance cleaning up. Interestingly, teachers' gendered expectation of preschool girls as responsible for cleaning, led the teachers I observed to use cleaning as a strongly gendered punishment for girls' "irresponsible" behaviors.

Additionally, at Early Achievers and Imagination Center, girls were sometimes blamed for boys' physical behavior. For example, one day while observing at Early Achievers, Eddy and Krystal were playing with the dress-up toys. Eddy began to tug at the clothes Krystal was playing with and wearing. Eddy got the dress up clothes from Krystal and hit her with them. Ms. Rose saw the conflict and came over to address it with the children. Ms. Rose said to Krystal, "If Eddy was already here then you need to wait because you and Eddy in a small space if not a good idea." Krystal replied to Ms. Rose, "But Eddy hit me and took the clothes I was using." Ms. Rose said, "But if you would not have been in there this wouldn't have happened." Krystal then went and played in a different area. Despite Eddy taking Krystal's clothes and hitting her with them, Krystal was blamed and disciplined by Ms. Rose for playing too close to Eddy. Here, Ms. Rose's actions reflect her notions of boys' physical behaviors as expected and not warranting of

disciplinary consequences. However, Ms. Rose viewed girls as having a responsibility of avoiding close proximities with boys who were "prone" to physical behavior. Similarly, teachers at Imagination Center and Early Achievers frequently reminded girls to give boys space (i.e. stay away from them) especially when boys engaged in wrestling, gunplay, or superhero play so as not to get injured or start a conflict with boys. Even when girls' feelings were hurt and they were upset and crying about a boy's actions (for example a boy growling at a girl) teachers rarely disciplined boys or asked them to apologize. Instead, teachers reminded girls how they were to respond in said interactions (e.g., "If you don't like someone growling at you, say, 'Please don't growl at me'"). This excerpt provides another example of the different reinforcement of behavior and behavioral expectations that boys and girls learned in the three preschools observed.

Discussion

Using data from observations in three preschools (nine classrooms total), I illuminate how preschool classroom practices that derive from developmental theories and preschool curricula are implemented in gendered ways. I find that children's gendered behaviors become enhanced, extended, and built into the structure of preschool, in part, through everyday classroom practices such as following the gendered child in accommodations and disciplinary interactions. I find that the institutionalized practices embedded in preschool produce a system of gender inequality as the way teachers discipline children reproduces the gender system. Specifically, I show how the way that teachers are or are not accommodating and disciplining children in preschool reproduces gender inequality within educational contexts. My findings suggest that there is gender inequality in the distribution of resources in preschool classroom, both in gender-specific curriculum and the amount of attention that preschool teachers devote to boys and girls. My findings illuminate several consequences of institutionalized practices, such

as following the (gendered) child. First, these practices further extend gender differences between girls and boys. Second, these practices (re)produce gender inequality through producing a masculine learning environment in preschool in which boys and girls receive unequal treatment.

Discipline is constitutive, not reactive, and through disciplinary interactions we call into existence the types of people we believe to exist (e.g., Foucault 1979). Socialization practices are not just producing gendered bodies (e.g., Martin 1998). These practices are also producing particular types of masculinities and femininities. These practices also have implications for children's educational outcomes and for their outcomes outside of education. Moments of disciplinary intervention matter because they represent when children are not acting appropriately, not just when they are engaging in behaviors that are not gender normative. Therefore, socialization is most visible around discipline because if children are doing what they are "supposed" to be doing, they are not disciplined. As such, I argue that discipline is an institutionalized tool through which preschools construct and enforce different organizational arrangements for boys and girls in schooling.

My findings demonstrate how femininity starts to become aligned with educational success in preschool (e.g., Orr 2011). I find that in preschool, girls learn the social and behavioral skills and routines that match later school expectations for success, while boys receive accommodations for their supposed behavioral "needs". Specifically, teachers instill behavioral dispositions of obedience and passivity with girls through their disciplinary practices and interactions. I find that through disciplinary interactions with teachers in preschool, girls are socialized to be good students; to pay attention and obediently follow teachers' instructions and requests. I argue that these gendered differences in teachers' disciplinary sanctions and

accommodations with boys and girls, may position girls' educational behavioral dispositions as more conducive to the school environment and teachers' expectations and demands. Therefore, girls may enter elementary school with the behavioral dispositions and self-regulation skills needed to succeed in school (at least in terms of disciplinary outcomes).

We know less about the role that teachers play in impacting gender gaps in children's early educational outcomes, including how teachers moderate masculinity (Weaver-Hightower 2003). My data contribute to these gaps in the literature by illuminating how classroom factors such as teachers' gendered accommodations and disciplinary practices and interactions provide resources for boys to perform masculinity (e.g., Connell 1996; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). In the classrooms I observed, teachers directly impacted the construction and enforcement of masculinities through fostering a masculine learning environment by implementing gendered curricular accommodations (e.g., Connell 1996). These findings are in line with Morris (2011) who suggests that boys' educational problems may "be rooted in the social construction of masculinity, rather than institutional discrimination against boys" (92). Through accommodation practices such as wrestling, heavy work, gun play, and push-ups, the preschool teachers I observed fostered hegemonic forms of masculinity in preschool aged boys, rather than actively working to challenge and dismantle them. In doing so, teachers' perceived boys' behavioral needs to display aggression (e.g., roughhousing or physical play) as unchangeable. In validating and constructing these hegemonic forms of masculinity in classrooms, these preschool teachers restricted boys' gender expressions and perpetuated gender inequality through endorsing hegemonic masculine expressions and embodiments, such as aggression and physical domination that solidify "broader social patterns of male power" (Bhana 2009:332; see also, Campbell Galman and Mallozzi 2015). Additionally, through rationalizing and accommodating outlets for

boys to engage in aggressive behaviors, teachers validate behaviors in young children that construct hegemonic masculinity as an appropriate expression of masculinity for boys (e.g., Kimmel 2000). Researchers have called for work that examines how teachers, through their training and practices, construct, challenge and prevent specific types of masculine expression in classrooms (e.g., Weaver-Hightower 2003). My data answer this call through illuminating what femininities and masculinities are offered and enforced in preschool classrooms and how teachers may construct and contribute to educational problems and inequalities surrounding masculinity (e.g., Skelton 2001; Weaver-Hightower 2003).

There have been several attempts to eliminate the academic and disciplinary "boy crisis" in education, and many of these reforms have been implemented in preschool. Kindergarten teachers consistently rate social and behavioral skills as the most important skill that children need to be successful in kindergarten. The preschools I observed implemented gendered curricular practices (such as wrestling, gun play, and exercise) to meet boys' real or perceived behavioral needs and interests. Many of the teachers and directors expressed views that these "needs" and interests of boys result in educational difficulties when they are left unmet in classrooms. However, these well-intentioned remedies incidentally produced and reproduced gender inequalities in children's classroom experiences and socialized behavioral dispositions. Therefore, and perhaps most importantly, I find that even when educational reforms and curricula attempt to reduce gender inequality and improve the situation for boys, they do so in ways that reinscribe differences between boys and girls and perpetuate gender inequality.

Additionally, these institutionalized practices that favor boys in preschool may end up disadvantaging boys as well as girls. Research finds that students' social, behavioral, and self-regulatory skills are significant determining factors in producing gender differences in later

educational outcomes (DiPrete and Jennings 2012). In following the gendered child and taking children "as they are", preschool teachers foster a masculine learning environment in which teachers implement gendered curricular accommodations (e.g., wrestling, push-ups, gun play, and heavy work) aimed at fostering, rather than curbing, boys' perceived unchangeable behavioral needs such as roughhousing and physical play. As a result, boys receive fewer disciplinary sanctions and more accommodations and assistance working through peer conflicts in preschool. However, my data suggest that teachers instill behavioral dispositions of obedience and passivity with girls through their disciplinary practices and interactions. I argue that these gendered differences in teachers' disciplinary sanctions and accommodations with boys and girls, may position girls' educational behavioral dispositions as more conducive to the school environment and teachers' expectations and demands. Therefore, girls may enter elementary school with the behavioral dispositions and self-regulation skills needed to succeed in school (at least in terms of disciplinary outcomes). However, boys socialized and cultivated behaviors, or gendered practices, in preschool (i.e. outlets to release physical aggression) become resistant and at odds with the routines and standards for behavior in elementary school (e.g., compliance to teachers' rules and requests, emphasis on learning, and limited opportunities for physical movement). Specifically, if boys' social and behavioral (self-regulatory) skills are accommodated in preschool by their teachers, but not accommodated by teachers in elementary school, this loss of gendered curricular accommodations for boys may help to explain some of the gender gaps in self-regulatory skills that we see in kindergarten, which we know affect later educational outcomes, including educational attainment (for example the gender gaps in social and behavioral skills found by DiPrete and Jennings 2012, and Owens 2016). Additionally, these socialized behavioral dispositions (e.g., compliance, obedience, passivity, and docility) that

advantage girls through instilling compliance to teacher's authority in grades k-12, are the same socialized behavioral dispositions that that disadvantage women in the labor market and that socialize girls and women into a limited form of femininity (Campbell Galman and Mallozzi 2015; MacNaughton 1995; Orr 2011; Walkerine 1981). Additionally, these gendered accommodations, disciplinary responses, and classroom responsibilities, reproduce gender inequalities as boys are given a message that they have physical energy in need of release, while girls are taught to avoid men's spaces. Boys and girls have different experiences during their educational careers and these experiences may contribute to the different, and unequal, positions that men and women hold in society (e.g., Dumais 2002; Orr 2011).

Future research should conduct a longitudinal study that follows children from the transition from preschool to kindergarten to examine how disciplinary interactions and practices in preschool impact students' behavioral dispositions and accommodations, and educational outcomes, in preschool. The structure and practices embedded in preschool classrooms emphasize following the child and accommodating children's behavioral needs. However, in elementary school the emphasis switches to learning subjects, grades, less time for physical movement, drastically lower teacher-student ratios, and academic performance and achievement. Through cultivating rough and tumble masculine expressions and accommodations in preschool classrooms, preschool may offer the foundation for some boys to eschew school work and teachers' authority in later years of schooling (e.g., Best 1983; Thorne 1993; Mac an Ghaill 1994; Kimmel 2010; McLeod 1995; Willis 1977). In other work, I examine the intersection of race, class, and gender in preschool disciplinary interactions. I find that middle-class African American boys, and girls from low-SES (non-tuition paying) families, receive more discipline than their peers (Chapter 3). It is important that future research continue to examine how students

experience inequalities throughout their educational careers, including the processes through which these inequalities become constructed and maintained in classrooms. Special attention should also be given to intersectionality in such examinations. My findings suggest that the gendered discourses available in classrooms may guide teachers' disciplinary practices in ways that differentially prepare students for academic success in later years of schooling. Preschool is an important site to examine the (re)production of gender inequality in schools as most children begin their educational careers in preschool, and experiences in preschool provide the foundational for students' expectations of schooling and later academic achievement (Gansen 2017a).

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CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Research Aims

The goal of this research was to examine how disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions in preschool classrooms construct and perpetuate social inequalities. Using a three-article format, I addressed the following questions: How do preschools participate in the gendered sexual socialization of children? What approaches to sexual socialization do teachers' use in preschool? What messages about sexuality and gender do young children receive from teachers' sexual socialization approaches, and how do they reproduce, or resist, these messages with their peers? How might disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions in preschool, operate in racialized, classed, and gendered ways? How do teachers' disciplinary responses to less consequential behaviors such as disobedience and disruptiveness vary by students' gender, race, and social class, in preschool? What are the mechanisms by which institutionalized practices embedded in preschool affect gender inequality? How are classroom practices that derive from developmental theories implemented in gendered ways? And, what are the unintended consequences of these institutionalized practices?

Summary of Findings

In Chapter 2, I illustrated that preschool teachers' play a significant role in young children's gendered sexual socialization (Gansen 2017). While media and parents have a significant role in children's gendered sexual socialization, I find that preschool teachers'

heteronormative practices, expectations, and understandings impact children's knowledge of heteronormativity and gendered power before they enter elementary school. Children receive these messages about sexuality and gender from interactions with their teachers and peers, and these messages affect how children reproduce or challenge norms about sexuality and gender in their peer groups and play interactions. While the teachers I observed occasionally allowed for conversations about same-sex relationships, they also disciplined children for some expressions of sexuality and gender. These findings show how heterosexuality becomes reproduced and disrupted through children's interactions with their teachers and peers in preschool classrooms.

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated how routine interactional disciplinary processes reproduce discipline disparities and educational inequalities in preschool. I found that the composition of preschool classrooms matter for students' experiences of discipline inequalities. Specifically, I found preschool teachers provided more monitoring and discipline to girls from low-socioeconomic backgrounds when they were in mostly middle-class classrooms; Middle-class black boys received more monitoring and discipline than their peers when they were in classrooms that are majority white, but that also had a significant proportion of black students; And, I found equitable discipline in classrooms that were predominately non-white but racially diverse in the proportions of students from non-white subgroups, and that exclusively served low-SES students. My results substantiate existing research on later years of schooling which finds that teachers' disciplinary responses to students' inconsequential behaviors such as disobedience and disruptiveness are ambiguous and follow for teacher discretion, and subsequently, disparate disciplinary outcomes (Lewis and Diamond 2015; Morris and Perry 2017). I argue that disciplinary interactions in preschool are a mechanism by which categories of race, class, and gender are built, differentiated, and made unequal in schools.

In Chapter 4, I presented evidence that everyday classroom practices derived from developmental theories and preschool curricula (such as, "following the child") are implemented in gendered ways in preschool classrooms. I find that the way teachers discipline children, in part based on institutionalized practices, reproduces gender inequality in preschool classrooms. My data also demonstrate gender inequality in the distribution of resources in preschool classrooms, both in the institutionalized gender-specific curricula, and in the distribution of resources for girls and for boys. Importantly, my findings suggest that in preschool femininity starts to become aligned with educational success, while preschool teachers' disciplinary interactions with boys create a gendered student role that may be at odds with the learning environments and expectations of later years of schooling.

Implications of Findings

The findings of this dissertation have several important implications for extant research and educational reforms. First, my findings contribute to literature on gendered sexual socialization in educational settings by demonstrating how teachers' daily classroom practices and interactions with students inform, and sometimes disrupt, heterosexualizing processes in schools. While previous work has focused on adolescent students in later years of schooling, my findings demonstrate that schools begin to shape children's sexual behaviors and identities in preschool. Teachers are powerful socializing agents in the lives of children, but children themselves also play an active role in the gendered sexual socialization of their peers. My findings show how children reproduce, and at times challenge, sexual and gendered norms they receive from their peers and teachers.

Second, my findings demonstrate how students' experiences of discipline inequality and

differential socialization into the ideal student role begin in preschool. While extant literature in this area relies on quantitative data or experimental studies on disciplinary outcomes and teachers' biases, my data provide on the ground observational data that show how teachers' routine disciplinary practices and interactions with students reproduce educational inequalities in preschool classrooms. Researchers have found that students' disobedient and disruptive behaviors allow for teacher discretion in discipline, and that this discretion results in disparate disciplinary outcomes (Lewis and Diamond 2015; Morris and Perry 2017). My results substantiate these findings through providing qualitative data on how preschool teachers' disparate disciplinary responses to children's inconsequential behaviors reproduced inequalities, particularly for black middle-class boys, and lower-SES girls. Importantly, my data illuminate how inequality is shaped early in students' educational careers through the gendered, racialized, and classed ways in which children's behaviors are disciplined in preschool.

Lastly, my data contribute to literature on gender inequality in education by demonstrating how preschool disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions construct and enforce unequal organizational arrangements for boys and girls in schooling. My findings also identify femininities and masculinities offered and enforced in preschool classrooms. I find that in preschool, femininity becomes aligned with school success as girls are socialized into an obedient student role, while boys receive gendered accommodations and less discipline when their behaviors violate classroom rules. These findings have important implications for work on gender differences in educational outcomes. My data suggest that girls may enter elementary school with the behavioral dispositions and self-regulation skills needed to succeed, while boys' gendered and cultivated behaviors in preschool may become resistant to the standards of elementary school.

The findings of this dissertation point to several policy implications and educational reforms for teachers and early childhood education. First, we need to increase preschool teachers' pay. Most preschool teachers receive very low pay and minimal benefits. Increasing preschool teachers' salary will help to retain experienced teachers and incentivize teachers to obtain postsecondary degrees. With calls for universal preschool in the United States and studies demonstrating the positive effects of preschool education for children's later academic achievement it is imperative that preschool teachers are well paid, well educated, and well supported. High quality preschool teachers will better facilitate a strong foundation for the start of children's educational careers.

Second, the employee handbooks of preschool centers should include explicit policies for how teachers are expected to respond to children's sexualized or "romantic" behaviors and interests. These handbooks should also contain explicit standards for discipline in the classrooms. Preschool teachers receive very little training on classroom management during their bachelor's program in early childhood education or the certificate of child development program. More often than not, preschool center handbooks state inappropriate forms of discipline that violate state licensing standards and thus are not allowed in preschool classrooms. Additionally, some preschool curricula like HighScope offer strategies for conflict resolution when two or more children have a dispute. But, what about when children engage in physical behaviors (e.g., hitting) or are disobedient? Preschool centers and directors need to be cognizant of the wide array of children's misbehaviors that teachers manage on a daily basis and offer teachers clear rules and expectations for how they should respond to these misbehaviors.

Preschool teachers also need to be offered more trainings and free resources on classroom management. For example, teachers should be offered trainings on how to manage children's

sexualized behaviors and interests when they appear in the classroom (see Chapter 2, pg. 42 on providing “teachable moments”). Secondly, teachers of all grade levels should be offered trainings that are geared toward identifying implicit biases, particularly those pertaining to gender, race, and social class biases. These practices will facilitate teachers’ self-reflectivity and allow teachers to have an honest conversation about how their biases affect the ways they discipline students in their classrooms. Discipline inequalities in preschool lay the foundation for future inequalities in educational outcomes (e.g. Edwards 2016). Providing trainings on implicit biases and effective classroom management practices will offer teachers strategies for how to apply disciplinary consequences equitably.

Lastly, early childhood education programs and preschool centers need to evaluate the implications of developmental tenets such as “following the child” and institutionalized accommodations and disciplinary practices in everyday classroom interactions. My findings demonstrate that the tenet of “following the child” contributes to a gender-specific curriculum in the amount of attention that teachers devote to boys and girls in their classrooms. Additionally, curricular accommodations directed at boys (e.g., wrestling, gun play, and heavy work) and teachers’ differential disciplinary responses to girls’ versus boys’ misbehaviors further extend gender differences between girls and boys and (re)produce gender inequality. Preschools should implement gender neutral curricula practices that seek to curb instead of foster behaviors such as roughhousing and physical aggression. These accommodations for physical behaviors cultivate masculine learning environments in preschool. However, this masculine learning environment is likely at odds with the learning environment of the k-12 system which requires obedience to classroom rules of conduct including bodily comportment, and an emphasis on testing and academic achievement.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This dissertation utilizes 10 months of ethnographic observational data, and the data are not longitudinal. Future work could track students' experiences of discipline inequalities, and their experiences of gendered sexual socialization longitudinally across multiple years of schooling to examine the long-term impacts of these experiences for students' perceptions of themselves, teachers, peers, and schooling more generally. This work should also examine how students' experiences of discipline inequalities impact their academic achievement. For example, future work could follow children as they transition from preschool to kindergarten to examine how disciplinary interactions in preschool impact students' behavioral dispositions and educational outcomes in preschool. It is important that research continues to be conducted on how students experience inequalities throughout their educational careers, and most importantly how processes that reproduce inequality become constructed and maintained in classrooms.

The preschools I observed were diverse, but as I state in Chapter 2, I found little differences in teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization across children's race or social class. Students' race and ethnicity affect how teachers and administrators respond to students' gender and sexuality embodiments in later years of schooling (e.g., Cohen 1997; Garcia 2009). Therefore, more research is needed on how teachers' shape young children's reproduction and disruption of heteronormativity in gendered, classed, and racialized ways.

The preschools I observed were also average-quality preschools. Research is needed on how preschool teachers' disciplinary practices and disciplinary interactions with children reproduce inequalities across various preschool contexts, such as public preschools. For example, future research could examine how students' intersectional social statuses impact their disciplinary experiences in public preschools. Additionally, future work is needed on preschool

teachers' approaches to gendered sexual socialization in low-quality and public preschools. This work should incorporate interviews with preschool teachers to examine how their teacher training(s) impact their approaches to gender sexual socialization in preschool classrooms.

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APPENDIX

Tables

Table 1. Study Overview			
	Imagination Center	**Kids Company**	**Early Achievers**
Classrooms Observed	5 Classrooms (~8 students and 1 teacher each)	2 Classrooms (~20 students and 2 teachers each)	2 Classroom (~16 students and 2 teachers each)
Tuition Rate	$205 per week	$230 per week	Free or sliding scale tuition
Preschool Rating	4 out of 5 stars	4 out of 5 stars	4 out of 5 stars
National Accreditation	No	No	Yes, National Association for the Education of Young Children
Participation in Michigan Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)	Yes	No	Yes
Curriculum	HighScope Curriculum	Creative Curriculum	HighScope Curriculum
Teachers			
Mean years of experience	3 years	17 years	6 years
Education			
BA	4 teachers, 1 aide	1 teacher	2 teachers
CDA	3 teachers, 2 aides	3 teachers, 2 aides	2 teachers, 2 aides
Demographics of Children	- White - Mostly Middle-class	- Two-thirds of classrooms, white; One-third, nonwhite - Middle-class	- Predominately Nonwhite - Low-SES

Table 2. Approaches to Gendered Sexual Socialization by Preschool

	Facilitative	**Restrictive**	**Passive**	**Disruptive**
Imagination Center (5 Classrooms)	- Encouraged boys and girls to kiss - Did not require girls' kissing consent - Interpreted behaviors between boys and girls as romantic - Promoted "crushes" and relationships between boys and girls	- Same-gender displays of affection, or homosocial behaviors, interpreted by teachers as friendly - Disciplined girls for bodily displays and for commenting on boys' bodily displays	- Ignored boys' bodily displays	- Wedding girl incident: Teacher corrected children that girls can marry girls
Early Achievers (2 Classrooms)	- Minor heteronormative practices (e.g., teachers read tradition fairy tales, children engaged in heteronormative play).	- Same-gender displays of affection, or homosocial behaviors, interpreted by teachers as friendly - Disciplined girls for bodily displays and for commenting on boys' bodily displays - Policed kissing: e.g., save kisses for family	- Ignored boys' bodily displays - Boys given control over girls' bodies without their consent	
Kids Company (2 Classrooms)	- Minor heteronormative practices (e.g., teachers read tradition fairy tales, children engaged in heteronormative play).	- Same-gender displays of affection, or homosocial behaviors, interpreted by teachers as friendly - Disciplined girls for bodily displays and for commenting on boys' bodily displays - Policed kissing: e.g., save kisses for family - Parents had active role	- Ignored boys' bodily displays	- Mermaid incident: Teacher allowed girl to play same-sex relationship scenario

Table 3. Composition of Preschools Observed			
	Imagination Center	**Kids Company**	**Early Achievers**
Racial Composition	Predominately White	Two-thirds white One-third nonwhite	Predominately nonwhite
SES Composition	Mostly Middle-Class	Middle-Class	Low-SES
Gender composition	~half boys, half girls	~half boys, half girls	~half boys, half girls
Subgroups of children that experienced discipline inequality	GSRP (Low-SES) Girls	Black, middle-class boys	N/A: Discipline was enacted equitably across subgroups