INTRODUCTION

- Transracial adoptees (TRAs), frequently face public comments
- Comments may reflect microaggressions—daily verbal, behavioral, intentional/unintentional that communicate hostile or negative slights and insults (Baden, 2015; Sue et al., 2007).
- TRAs may repeat these messages; but as they grow older, they may better understand these biases and refrain from conveying these messages.
- TRAs who have adoption and racial discussions (AD, RD) with parents may convey fewer microaggressions.

METHOD

Sample
- 38 TRAs ages 5-11 (M=7.59), and their White parents

Procedure
- Using a codebook, adoption microaggressions (AMA, Baden, 2015) and racial microaggressions (RMA, Sue et al., 2007), were coded when children's discourse contained bias.
- Parent interviews were coded to analyze AD and RD. Frequency of ADs and RDs were coded 0-3. PBs (preparation for bias discussion) were coded in response to bias incidents.

RESULTS

Question 1: What types of adoption and racial microaggressions are conveyed by young children?

Adoption Microaggression (AMA) | Racial Microaggression (RMA)
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Code | Example from child interviews | Example from child interviews
Biology is | [People adopt because] they really | Alien in own land
best/normative | want to have a child but they can’t | I’m not really like my friends.
Bad seed adoptees | Maybe they wanted a boy instead | Color blindness
Grateful adoptees | I feel lucky to have been adopted | some people are white some people are black. But it doesn’t matter because we can all be friends
Shameful/inadequate | Sometimes parents cannot take care of the kids...they could be on drugs | ...in China...people can have one child that’s a boy
Phantom birth | I was born from somebody else’s body and came to this part of the family | Pathologizing cultural values/communication
Pseudo/inadequate | If they get tired of having to clean their | Second class citizen [Being Chinese is] great, but I like to be America.
adoptive parents | diapers and then they have to sell them | Invalidation of interethnic and intraethnic differences
Altrusitic rescuers | My parents brought me into a world | I said [to another child] people
Who have the same color of skin and | like America so I could be free | have the same color of skin and
Asian-American | In the past I lived in China...I can’t speak Chinese, so it’s kind of... | same hair, we all are from China
Possible discomfort | I don’t feel like it (talking about | Possible discomfort about being Chinese or
with being adopted | the adoption) | sometimes I don’t like talking

Question 2: Are there developmental differences in the microaggressions conveyed?

Age vs MA

# of conveyed MA

- # of MA with oldest children
- # of MA with oldest children

Dev Diff of MA Moderated by PB Disc

Age

# of conveyed MA

- no discussion integrated
- had discussion

Dev Diff of MA Moderated by PB Disc

Age

# of conveyed MA

- no discussion integrated
- had discussion

Question 3: To what extent are parent-child AD, RD or PB discussion related to the number of microaggressions conveyed by children?

1: # of conveyed MA

- 1: ado Disc vs MA
- 2: race Disc vs MA

# of conveyed MA

- 1: r = -.33
- 2: r = .16
- 3: r = -.18

DISCUSSION

- Older children conveyed more MAs. When moderated by PB discussions, older children conveyed fewer MAs if they had discussions with their parents. PB discussions may help children better understand biases, hence conveying fewer MAs.
- RDs positively related to MAs. RDs may be difficult for White parents, and parents might not be comfortable at having RDs.
- Future studies look at parental influences on sibling patterns of MAs (e.g., the oldest children outliers).
- Future studies look closely at why children conveyed fewer MAs.

Application
- Parents should prepare to have discussions about adoption and bias.
- Post-adoption services can help mitigate TRAs’ conveyed and internalized MAs, e.g., parent training, mentoring programs.

Limitation
- Small sample size; interview not designed for MAs
- Quality or content of discussions not measured

REFERENCES