# Talkin' Black: White Early Childhood Educators' Beliefs about African American English

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# What is AAE?

- AAE is rule-governed, "with Africanized semantic, grammatical, pronunciation, and rhetorical patterns" (Smitherman, 2006, p.3)

- AAE has its own intonation, and style that is distinctly part of Black American culture

- AAE was born out of resistance to cultural and linguistic assimilation

What does AAE have to do with understanding racism in the early years?

Young Black children have rich linguistic assets

Yet, Black children's use of AAE is stigmatized

- **Gupta (2010) found:**
  - **49%** of educators felt AAE was incompatible with school
  - **56%** believed AAE contributed to opportunity gap
  - **71%** believed children would have higher achievement if they spoke SAE

- **Brown (2019) found:**
  - educators with negative beliefs of AAE were **50x more** likely to refer children to speech therapy

SAE

AAE

# Purpose

To investigate the beliefs that White early childhood educators (ECE-3rd grade) have about the use of AAE and its impact on children's achievement.

Focus on three factors:
- Education, experience and/or training
- Knowledge of AAE
- Perceived competence

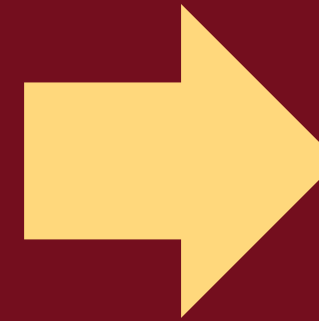# Measures of Teachers' Knowledge, Competence & Training on their Beliefs

**KNOWLEDGE OF AAE:**
*IMPLICIT AAE KNOWLEDGE (HENDRICKS & DIEHM, 2020)*

**PERCEIVED COMPETENCE IN SUPPORTING AAE SPEAKERS:**
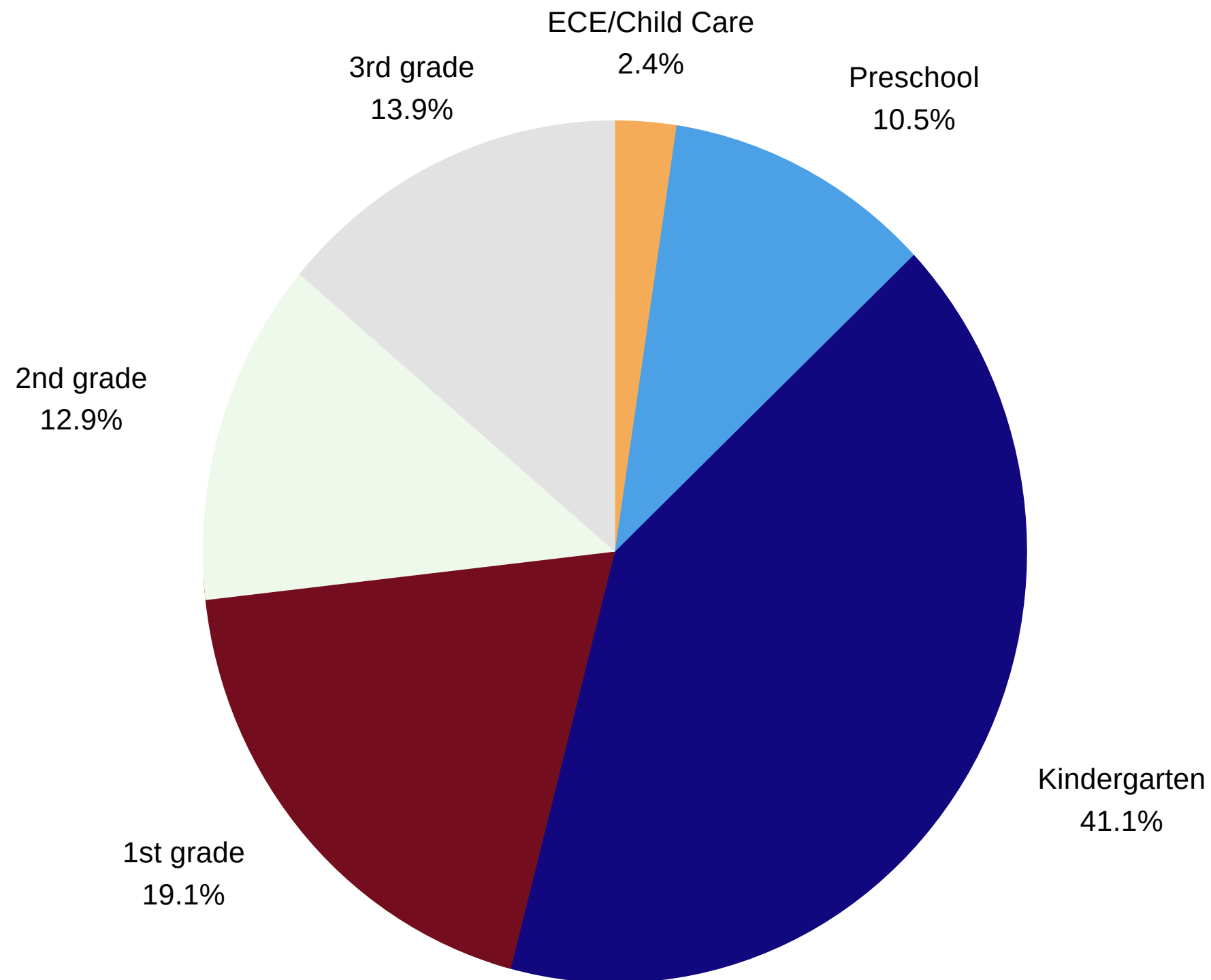TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL BELIEFS ABOUT AAE SCALE (GUPTA, 2010).

**TRAINING:**
(1) IMPLEMENTING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES; (2) WORKING WITH DIVERSE STUDENTS; (3) SPEAKERS OF AAE

**BELIEFS OF AAE & IMPACT ON ACHIEVEMENT:**
*TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF AAE SCALE (GUPTA, 2010)*

# Method: Participants

## Educators by Setting



- **Total:** 209 White educators

- **Gender:** 98.56% female

- **Age range:** 20-69 years old

- **Experience**: 1-42 years

- **Setting:** 78.85% in public schools

Pie chart labels:
- ECE/Child Care 2.4%
- 3rd grade 13.9%
- Preschool 10.5%
- 2nd grade 12.9%
- Kindergarten 41.1%
- 1st grade 19.1%

# Procedures & Analyses

**Procedures:**

- Participants recruited via social media, emails, networks, etc.
- Participants completed online survey containing questions related to each measure (beliefs, knowledge, competence, training)

**Analyses:**

- Linear regressions, with separate models for the dependent variables (i.e., beliefs of AAE & impact on achievement)
- Analyses controlled for covariates (e.g., type of school, racial composition of classroom, grade)
- Planned pairwise contrasts to test effects of predictors on beliefs about AAE

# Does education, teaching experience, and training predict beliefs about AAE?

## Results:

- **Education, teaching experience, and training predicted negative beliefs about AAE.** Teachers with more negative beliefs were those with:

  - Associate's or bachelor's degrees
  - 31 or more years of experience
  - Less trainings related to culturally relevant practices, linguistic and cultural diversity, or speakers of AAE

# Do teachers' knowledge of AAE predict their negative beliefs about AAE?

**Results:**

- **Knowledge about AAE was not a predictive** of teachers' negative beliefs of AAE by itself

# Do teachers' perceived competence about supporting AAE speakers predict their negative beliefs?

**Results:**

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- **Overall, higher levels of perceived competence were associated with lower levels of negative** AAE beliefs

- **High knowledge of AAE and low perceived competence** resulted most negative beliefs about AAE

# Implications

- Linguistic racism and bias is a critical topic to consider when dismantling racism in the early years.

- Pre-service and in-service training on linguistic bias and anti-Blackness needs to be prioritized.

- We need policies to address AAE in terms licensure requirements and technical assistance, assessments, and instructional practices.