

OBJECTIVES

Highlight the impact of adultification on minority youth and its contribution to systemic disparities. Provide possible solutions to minimize and target the root of the adultification process through socio-cultural, emotional, and political domains.

01

**MULTIPLE
JEOPARDIES**

02

**DISCRIMINARY
INNOCENCE**

03

**EDUCATIONAL
DISCREPANCIES**

04

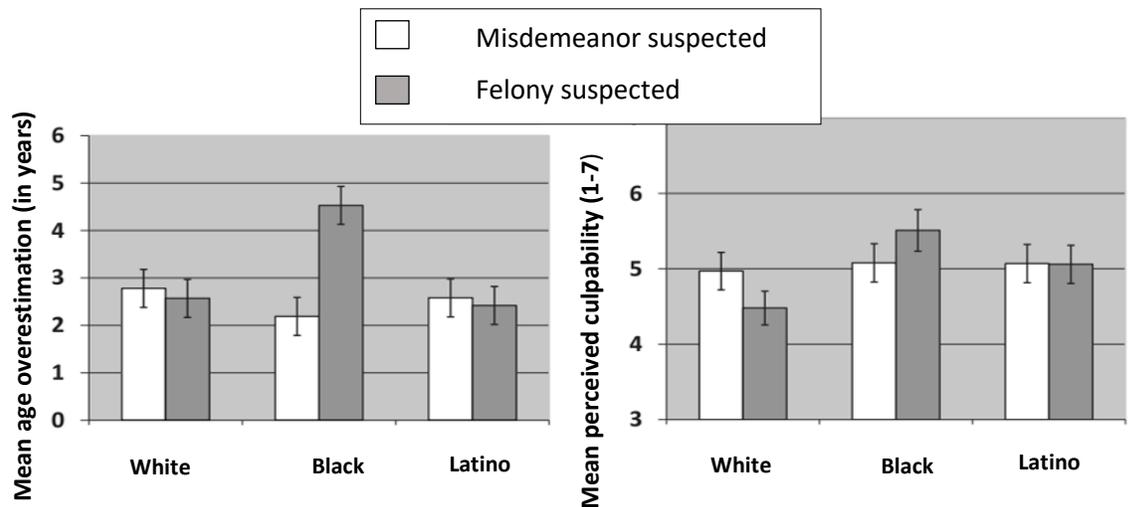
**SOLUTIONS TO
COMBAT
ADULTIFICATION
BIAS**

01: Multiple Jeopardies

April 20, 2021, 16-year-old Ma’Khia Bryant was fatally shot by a Columbus Police Officer in front of her home. Many cited Bryant’s attempted assault on two women, ages 20 and 22, as justification for her death. Yet others, particularly amongst Black and Brown community members, knew this justification overlooked key factors. Scholar Drs. Treva Lindsey and Marc Lamont Hill (2021) noted that overlapping factors, or *multiple jeopardies*, arise when Black and other youth of color are disciplined in institutions rooted in white supremacy. Multiple jeopardy examines how various factors of one’s identity (such as gender, class, or race) compounds the effects of discrimination experienced groups and individuals (King 1988). As a young, Black, urban, plus-sized female, these factors of Ma’Khia’s perceived identity contributed to tragedy that occurred that ended in her death.

02: Discriminatory Innocence

In an American Psychological Association study students rated the innocence (on a scale of 1-10) of Black and white children of different age groups. There was a significant change in the perceived innocence of Black children once they reached age 10 which was solely based on the factor race. This study exemplifies the different standards Black youth are held to when compared to their white peers.



American Psychological Association. (2021). The Essence of Innocence: Consequences of Dehumanizing Black Children. [Data Entry]. <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/psp-a0035663.pdf>

This idea of a perceived value of innocence based on race is dangerous, particularly when it targets Black and Brown youth as potential criminals who pose a threat to society. This same study also suggests that Black and Hispanic youth were disproportionately perceived to be more likely to commit felonies, when compared to that of their white counterparts. This perception, coupled with the fact that Black youth are perceived to be much older than their actual age, provides insight as to why police too often use extreme force with Black and Brown children (Goff et. al 2014, 534). Multiple jeopardies and discriminatory innocence often result in *Adultification*—the overestimation of the age of young people of color—which results in harsher institutional punishment when compared to that experienced by their white

03: Educational Discrepancies

A study published by [Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality](#) (2017) found that young Black girls in pre-K - high school settings are perceived “as less innocent and more adult-like than white girls of the same age, especially between 5–14 years old ” (1). The study also found that, as compared to white girls, Black girls, were perceived as:

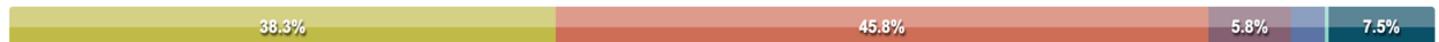
- Needing less nurturing, protection, support, and comfort;
- Being more independent; and
- More knowledgeable of adult topics, including sex.

Black children in school are often cited as having “attitude problems” or “issues with authority” based on the cultural differences in communication (e.g., loud tone, expressive hand movement (2017, 11).

A study published in the [Sociology of Education](#) found that schools with larger “Black and poor populations” are more likely to implement criminal justice-oriented disciplinary policies — such as suspensions, expulsions, police referrals, and arrests — and less likely to connect them to psychological or behavioral care" (Ramey 2015). According to the Department of Education Suspension Data for Girls and Boys, Black boys are three times more likely to be suspended from school than white students, and Black girls are six times more likely to be suspended compared to white students. Suspension leads to students falling behind in school and thus increasing the risk of students going down the school-to-prison pipeline (Heitzeg 2009, 2).

All Ohio Schools

WHO GETS ARRESTED?



WHO GETS REFERRED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT?



WHAT DOES OVERALL ENROLLMENT LOOK LIKE?



Legend: WHITE, BLACK, HISPANIC, ASIAN, NATIVE AMERICAN, HAWAIIAN, TWO OR MORE

Editorial Projects in Education. (2021). Which Students Are Arrested the Most? [Data Entry]. <https://www.edweek.org/which-students-are-arrested-most-in-school-u-s-data-by-school#/overview>

04: Recommendations to Combat Adultification

Share Power

Include students in the developing school polices. Genuinely engaging youth and popular culture in the classroom to make curriculum culturally relevant. This allows students to engage within the community and help create an understanding of cultural differences in fact tcommunication (Klump & McNeir, 2005).

Strengthen Teacher Understanding

Implement a care practice that includes cultural awareness, competency, and gender responsiveness that help educators understand Black, Brown, and all children. Including youth and their priorities provides leads to improving the quality of life their community (Nieto, 2000).

Reimagine Policing in Schools

Reimagine carceral figures in schools populated by Black and non-Black people of color. This can make youth of color feel as though they aren’t prisoners in their own school and prevent being traumatized at such a young age (Justice Policy Institute 2008).