



Adultification Bias Training

for Judges



The facts are indisputable: Black girls face disproportionately harsh treatment in the juvenile justice system. The inequities they experience are driven in part by adultification bias. This bias can operate unconsciously to shape court decisions, undermining fairness and contradicting established science on child and adolescent development.

This training equips judges with tools to ensure more equitable outcomes for Black girls.

Adultification bias is a form of discrimination in which adults view Black girls as less innocent and more mature than their white peers.

The Center's work has far-reaching implications across public sectors, including the justice, education, and healthcare systems.

Purpose: To equip judges with the knowledge and tools to recognize and interrupt adultification bias that can unconsciously influence decision-making.

Audience: Judges, especially those who serve in juvenile and family courts or otherwise preside over cases involving children.

Learning Objectives:

- Define adultification bias and understand its role in perpetuating racial and gender disparities in the juvenile justice system.
- Understand data demonstrating disproportionate outcomes for Black girls at key decision points in the justice system, including sentencing, and competency determinations.
- Discuss relevant neuroscience and Supreme Court holdings and reasoning that uphold the principle that children must be treated differently than adults.
- Learn “bias interruption” strategies using the Center’s benchcard and self-reflection prompts and through interactive discussions.
- Explore language that can help maintain courts’ recognition and treatment of Black girls as children.

Format: 90–120 minutes | Zoom or In-Person | Interactive discussion + case examples.

Continuing Legal Education: The content meets most jurisdictions’ CLE requirements.

*Contact the Center to learn more about customized trainings or presentations.
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