

COMBAT ADULTISM



WHAT IS ADULTISM?



The "systematic subordination of young people who have little access to good, resources, and power to make decisions" (Kennedy, 2019, p. 28)

The belief that kids are universally **NAIVE, GULLIBLE, VULNERABLE, IMPULSIVE, AND INCAPABLE.**

IT SOUNDS LIKE...



IT LOOKS LIKE...



EXPLOITATION

Unpaid internships, Taxation without representation, Getting "paid with pizza", Research without consent, Trafficking



MARGINALIZATION

Punishment instead of supportive services, Exclusion from "adult topics", Increasing suicide rates, School to Prison Pipeline



POWERLESSNESS

Exclusion from decision-making processes, Expectation of obedience, Little access to care and supportive services



STEREOTYPES

Selfish, Materialistic, Reckless, Obsessed with social hierarchy, Violent



VIOLENCE

Familial abuse, "Smacking", "Spanking", "No Tolerance" policies in schools, Institutional abuse

HOW TO HELP

✓ CHECK YOUR BIASES & BELIEFS

Ask:

- Would I treat an adult this way?
- Would I make this decision for an adult?
- Would I talk to an adult in this tone of voice?
- Would I limit an adult's behavior this way?

Consider:

- Each child's unique needs, strengths, barriers, and developmental abilities rather than stereotyping
- Your perception of a "good kid"

ADVOCATE



Educate:

- Learn developmentally appropriate practices
- Continuing education in your field
- Provide youth-empowering resources to schools and families

Empower:

- Look for ways to involve children in decision-making opportunities according to their abilities
- Support youth-led organizations
- Involve student governments or youth organizations in school or community decisions and planning
- Have developmentally appropriate conversations instead of restricting conversation topics

Dismantle:

- Implement restorative practices instead of authoritarian and punitive disciplinary practices
- Connect kids with service-learning opportunities

REFERENCES

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Kennedy. (2019). *Disrupting adultism: practices that enable or constrain intergroup contact between youth and adults*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
Tate, T. (2003). Insist or enlist? Adultism versus climates of excellence. *Reclaiming children and youth*, 12(1)



RESOURCES

- Adamfletcher.net
- Youthspeaks.org
- Blackyouthproject.com