Protecting Black Girlhood: How NCNW Can Respond to the Cradle-To-Prison Pipeline

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This session will provide an introductory overview, key terms, and institutional policies that undergird the Cradle-To-Prison Pipeline. This session will be presented through the intersecting frameworks of play deprivation and Black girlhood studies as criminalizing policies disproportionately target students of color by withholding their access to play time and criminalizing their joy. Incorporating movement, dialogue, and critical inquiry, participants will learn about the significance of and diversity within play as well as how to advocate for the abolishment of the Cradle-To-Prison Pipeline in our local communities.
Stand Up If...

*Please turn your cameras on.*

We will read a series of prompts – one at a time. If the prompt resonates with you or speaks to your own experience, please stand up. Scroll through the screen and notice how many others are standing with you.

**Modification:** If you do not have the capacity to stand up, please begin the activity by holding up all ten fingers. Hold your hands in front of the screen so that your fingers may be seen. If the prompt resonates with you or speaks to your own experience, please put a finger down. Scroll through the screen and notice how many others are standing and/or have put a finger down.
“... the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class. Moreover, ignoring difference within groups contributes to tension among groups... And so, when the practices expound identity as woman or person of color as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling” (1242).

– Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of

Intersectionality
BASIC TERMS

Play Deprivation

“[Play deprivation is] a spectrum from extreme to moderate reduction in opportunities to play, which negatively affects children’s social, cognitive, and physical development” (219).

– Belknap & Hazler, "Empty playgrounds and anxious children"
BASIC TERMS

Adultification

“A process of socialization, in which children function at a more mature developmental stage because of situational context and necessity, especially in a low-resource community environment” (4).

A social or cultural stereotype that is based on how adults perceive children ‘in the absence of knowledge of children’s behavior and verbalizations. This latter form of adultification... is based in part on race...” (4).

– Epstein, Blake, & Gonzalez, “Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girl’s Childhood”
“Internalized racial oppression is 'the process by which Black people internalize and accept, not always consciously, the dominant white culture's oppressive actions and beliefs toward Black people (e.g. negative stereotypes, discrimination, hatred, falsification of historical facts, racist doctrines, white supremacists ideology), while at the same time rejecting the African worldview and cultural motifs.' For Black women and girls, internalized racial oppression is also gendered" (43).

– Monique Morris, *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School*
“Professor Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, who coined the term ‘politics of respectability,’ wrote ... that Black women felt respectable behavior earned, ‘esteem from white America, and ... strove to win the black lower class’s psychological allegiance to temperance, industriousness, thrift, refined manners and Victorian sexual mores.’


– Nicholas Powers, “Respectability Politics Is Losing Ground in Black Liberation"
“...girls explained that they were sent out of class for the entire period, or were yelled at, embarrassed in class, or left feeling constantly scrutinized. Historically, these informal types of punishment have not been documented as forms of discipline within school discipline literature. Instead, there has been a greater emphasis on suspensions and expulsions. However, these ‘unarchived forms of discipline’ were also commonly practiced, if not more so than suspensions and expulsions. They also served to constrain and punish the girls’ movements and behaviors” (183).

“Pushout refers to the punitive discipline practices schools use, which exclude students from class and too often push them out of school altogether. These practices affect all students, but they disproportionately affect students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQIA students...

School policies that are innately biased make it difficult not only for girls of color to thrive in school, but even to merely survive in such a setting. Zero tolerance policies criminalize Black and Brown girls as they are being expelled or suspended for minor infractions.”

– Girlsinc.org
“Less a pipeline than a nexus or a swamp, the STPP is generally used to refer to interlocking sets of structural and individual relationships in which youth, primarily of color, are funneled from schools and neighborhoods into under- or unemployment and prisons...

... Often the term used to describe the differentials between white and black suspension and arrest is ‘disproportionality,’ but this term masks the central roles white supremacy and anti-black racism play in shaping ideas and practices surrounding school discipline.”

— Miriame Kaba & Erica Meiners
“Arresting the Carceral State”
“Cradle-To-Prison Pipeline consists of a complex array of social and economic factors as well as political choices that converge to reduce the odds that poor children — especially poor black and Latino children — will grow up to become productive adults.”

– Marian Wright Edelman

Children’s Defense Fund, President Emerita
“Instead of trying to repair a flawed system, educational reformers offer survival tactics in the forms of test-taking skills, acronyms, grit labs, and character education, which Love calls the educational survival complex.”

“[In the educational survival complex] students are left learning to merely survive, learning how schools mimic the world they live in, thus making schools a training site for a life of exhaustion. This reality makes it difficult to digest the dark suffering that goes on in our schools because we want to believe that our schools can repair the sins of our nation. To mitigate their suffering and uphold whiteness, dark families are given one short-sighted, often racist education reform model after another” (27).

– Bettina Love, We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom
“And in a perverse twist of justice, many girls who experience sexual abuse are routed into the juvenile justice system because of their victimization. Indeed, sexual abuse is one of the primary predictors of girls’ entry into the juvenile justice system. A particularly glaring example is when girls who are victims of sex trafficking are arrested on prostitution charges — punished as perpetrators rather than served and supported as victims and survivors.

Once inside, girls encounter a system that is often ill-equipped to identify and treat the violence and trauma that lie at the root of victimized girls’ arrests. More harmful still is the significant risk that the punitive environment will re-trigger girls’ trauma and even subject them to new incidents of sexual victimization, which can exponentially compound the profound harms inflicted by the original abuse.”

— “The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls’ Story”
"[Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy]...positions dynamic cultural dexterity as a necessary good, and sees the outcome of learning as additive rather than subtractive, as remaining whole rather than framed as broken, as critically enriching strengths rather than replacing deficits. Culturally sustaining pedagogy exists wherever education sustains the lifeways of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling."

“Our current system, often responding to harm done in relationships or crimes, asks three questions: (1) What law was broken?, (2) Who broke it?, and (3) What punishment is warranted? Restorative justice asks different questions, focusing on strengthening relationships between individuals and ties to one another in their communities. It asks us: Who was harmed? What are the needs and responsibilities of all affected? How do the parties together address needs and repair harm?

Restorative justice in the Westernized sense often indicates the implementation of tools used to resolve conflict, but indigenous peacemaking is inseparable from the restorative healing practices that are lived every day in connection with oneself, one’s community, and nature according to tribal traditions and lifeways.”

BASIC TERMS

Black Girl Magic

What is your definition of *Black Girl Magic*?
Share and/or tell us in the chat.
Black Girl Ways of Knowing

"From their bodies... Black girls produce experiential knowledge about the world that should inform the ways we understand their experiences and interpret their bodies...

... Ruth Nicole Brown argues against the dehumanization of Black girls when she says that Black girls are free and Black girlhood is freedom; she articulates a freedom in girlhood that goes beyond a category of age, but is a feeling or an affective relationship to the self. Therefore, I assert that Black girl ways of knowing lead Black girls and women to a collective freedom that dismantles racist paradigms and misogynist dogma that keep us bound in the slavery that is dissemblance and toxic respectability" (4-5).

— Aria S. Halliday, "Twerk sumn!: theorizing Black girl epistemology in the body"
“The intergenerational historical narratives of Black families are encapsulated in the social and communication patterns parents transmit to children and relevant to the study of early development. Play is a known medium through which children work through difficult and complex issues, actively move from one developmental stage to the next and consolidate parts of their identity” (88).

— Hale and Bocknek, “Applying a Cultural Prism to the Study of Play Behavior of Black Children”
My son has been suspended five times. He’s 3.

Black families fight entrenched prejudices to get fair discipline for their children in schools.

‘Only White People,’ Said the Little Girl

By Topher Sanders

Minutes later, three white police officers arrive and upon sight of their uniforms the kindergartner becomes subdued and sits down quietly. In the video you can hear one of the three officers saying, “Do you remember me? I’m the one who told your mom I’d put handcuffs on you?”

Brooklyn residents’ complaints about playground designed as prison are finally heard
An 11-year-old black student at a private Roman Catholic school near New Orleans was asked to leave class on Monday because administrators said her braided hair extensions violated school rules, according to a lawyer for the girl's family.

Massachusetts Officials Call Child Protective Services on Parents Whose Kids Miss ‘Zoom School’

She wakes to the sound of breathing. The smaller children lie tangled beside her, their chests rising and falling under winter coats and wool blankets. A few feet away, their mother and father sleep near the mop bucket they use as a toilet. Two other children share a mattress by the rotting wall where the mice live, opposite the baby, whose crib is warmed by a hair dryer perched on a milk crate.
Elementary School

The Magic of Black Girls’ Play
Game-songs created and passed down by Black girls are full of sophistication, power and cultural meaning.

Lee Perry, 7, started dancing outside his house to support the Black Lives Matter movement, and by early August had raised $18,500 for the Black Lives Matter Global Net Foundation. (Alan Penney.)

Reasons to Dream
Middle School

New Mexico Officer Resigns as Troubling Video Surfaces of Him Manhandling 11-Year-Old Black Girl Over Cafeteria Milk: ‘You’re Hurting Me!’

Four girls at N.Y. middle school subjected to 'dehumanizing' strip search, lawsuit says

The allegations that girls were strip-searched at school led Gov. Andrew Cuomo to ask the state Department of Education to investigate.

Cleveland just fired the cop who shot and killed 12-year-old Tamir Rice more than 2 years ago

Officer Timothy Loehmann shot Rice at a Cleveland park in November 2014.
Middle School

Girl's drive to find 1,000 'black girl books' hits target with outpouring of donations

Eleven-year-old Marley Dias's appeal #1000blackgirlbooks, which gathered huge support, grew from her frustration at only being given stories 'about white boys and their dogs'.

CLANTON, Ala. (WIAT) — Nothing is standing in Ta'Mya Bulger's way.

As all sports become more inclusive, it's becoming more familiar to see girls on the football team. At Hewitt-Trussville, the varsity football team has a female kicker, Jordan Lynn. And at Clanton Middle School, 13-year-old Ta'Mya Bulger plays both sides of the field, wide receiver and defensive back.

This is not her first time playing football though. She played football in fifth grade but took a couple of years off. Bulger said her mother allowed her to try out for the team this year at her middle school.

First-year head coach Thomas Hughes said he was excited and welcomed Bulger to try out for the team.

'Never again': how 11-year old Naomi Wadler became a rallying voice of black protest
The authorities in South Carolina are investigating an encounter captured on two videos that went viral Monday afternoon that show a white school police officer in a Columbia classroom grabbing an African-American student by the neck, flipping her backward as she sat at her desk, then dragging and throwing her across the floor.

Community members confronted a circle of police in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood over a "bait truck" filled with Nike shoes and allegedly left open by police aiming to lure potential thieves and make arrests.

"Y'all dirty, man," a man tells officers in an online video of the incident published Thursday. "Y'all see kids playing ball and you pull a f----- Nike truck into the ghetto."
High School

"Black girls should not only be visible when we are mourning them. Black girls should be visible when they're living and joyous."

- Amoni Solomon | Arizona | 17
JUSTICE FOR BLACK GIRLS

"As a Black girl, what people think of me should not come before my happiness."

- Mariama Diallo | New York, NY | 16
JUSTICE FOR BLACK GIRLS

I am an asset to the world.

AMBER TAYLOR
#HYPEAFFIRMATIONS
NCNW: Individual Practices

- Practice listening to Black children, especially Black girls.
- Practice the “Why Framework.”
- Practice having difficult conversations.
- Practice strengths-based approaches.
- Practice asking parents what barriers to engagement they are experiencing.
- Practice advocating for structural changes & a culture of support for teachers and educators.
- Practice imagining alternatives & creative strategizing & co-constructing safety.
- Practice intergenerational healing and rest.
NCNW: Section/Org. Interventions

- Contact your Section’s local School Board & petition to end zero-tolerance policies & school suspensions.
- Support and hold the school board and school administrators accountable for ensuring that schools are not over-referring to law enforcement and are maintaining jurisdiction over school police.
- Train all section members in Trauma-Informed care. Encourage local schools to train their educators in Trauma-Informed care.
- Advocate for Culturally Sustainable & developmentally appropriate pedagogy.
- Sponsor professional development workshops for local Early Child Care programs.
- Host a listening session with teachers to explore their needs, challenges, and strengths.
NCNW: Section/Org. Interventions (continued)

- Create intergenerational Sister Circles rooted in mutual aid.
- Advocate for comprehensive sex education.
- Speak with PTA and/or parental leaders about school-based discipline policies.
- Organize a section book club to educate the community about the history, structures and complexities of the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Collaborate with students to create a personal and community-wide asset map.
- Petition for schools to implement Restorative Justice practices & support the development of alternatives to police in schools.
- Petition the School Board to invest in counselors, social workers, Restorative Justice Coordinators, Community Intervention Workers and other supportive school staff.
Organizations to Support

- Justice 4 Black Girls
- Abolitionist Teacher Network
- Children’s Defense Fund
- Grantmakers for Girls of Color
- The Conscious Kid
- Gwen’s Girls
- Nap Ministry
- Audre Lorde Project
- Project NIA
- GirlTrek
- National Black Women’s Justice Institute
- Parenting for Liberation
- Black Visions Collective
- Child Care Aware of America
As of today, I pledge to play more to benefit myself and the generations who will follow me. I promise to do my best to ensure that not only children in my community play regularly, but I as well. I understand that playing is healthy and beneficial for the mind, body, and soul. I desire to be the embodiment of this pledge by taking the initiative to lead my community into a future of more playing and less stressing.

– Kamryn Days, 15 year-old Magical Black Girl (Atlanta, GA)

2019