How Do We Know What’s Working: Embracing Data & Assessment in State Expulsion Prevention Strategies

QRIS CONFERENCE SESSION 407

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Today’s Session...

Be grounded in the research and explore drivers of expulsion

Address the question: how do we know if we are reducing and preventing exclusionary practices?

◦ Role of State Policy
◦ 4 “P’s of Data”
◦ Colorado and Arkansas State Examples

Apply through Small Group Activities
Introductions
**Program Leader’s Guide**

Remove from activities that include other children

Remove in the short-term or limit the time a child attends the program

Dismiss a child permanently

Encourage families to voluntarily terminate services, “soft expulsion”

**Caring for Our Children**

Terminating enrollment because of challenging behavior or health condition

Reductions in the amount of time in attendance at the setting

Other services are limited on the basis of challenging behaviors, e.g. denying outdoor time, withholding food, and using food as a reward or punishment
Research Tells Us
Why

Suspension and expulsion are stressful and negative experiences in themselves that can impact child outcomes.

Expulsion or suspension early in a child’s education predicts later expulsion or suspension in school.

Young students who are expelled or suspended are as much as **10 times** more likely to:

- Drop out of high school
- Fail a grade
- Be incarcerated
10.4% of Pre-K teachers expelled 1 or more in past year
Who

Boys 3½ times more likely than girls

4-year-olds 50% more likely than 3-year-olds

Black children expelled at 2x the rate of White children; 5x the rate of Asian children

Black children make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of preschoolers suspended more than once

Latino and Black boys combined represented 46% of all boys in preschool, but 66% of all boys suspended

Girls who are Black, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander represent 30% or more of all out-of-school suspensions than girls who are White, Latina, and Asian

Regardless of the study, there are significant disparities by race

These risks are multiplicative


Civil Rights Data Collection: Early Childhood Education – March 2014
A study in Chicago found that 42% of birth to three child care programs expelled at least one child in the previous year because of behavior.

A 2017 study in Philadelphia found that 26% of child care programs had expelled at least one child in the past year and that toddlers were just as likely as preschoolers to be asked to leave the child care setting.
How do we understand the problem?

Our Point of View

Expulsion is not a child problem, this is about adult decisions.

A solution focused on children and not changing anything about how we work with children and families will perpetuate current trends in expulsion rates.

It is not a single-factor problem - requires a multi-pronged approach.

Need to address the racial disparities in the earliest years.
Four Drivers of Expulsion to Consider
Driver 1: Structural Quality
What increases the likelihood of expulsion?

- High teacher-child ratios
- High teacher stress / Feeling hopeless
- Private and faith-based child care
- Long school day
- Too little structure
- Too restrictive structure
- No consistent ongoing availability of a mental health consultant
Voices from the Field: Implication for Organizational Capacity

- Programs unable to be reflective regarding their role in children’s behavior
- Responding to other parents’ reactions
- Afraid of losing staff who are hard to replace and need to maintain ratios, quality requirements, etc.
- Scared or do not like the child’s parent(s)
- This training won’t work with this child
- Belief that there must be a better program out there to meet this child’s needs...
Driver 2: Lack of Knowledge of Child Development
Knowledge of Child Development Needed

Social-emotional development occurs in context of family, community and cultural expectations.

Challenging behavior is a part of typical child development and offers “touch points”.

Cross-cultural differences in children’s expression and interpretation of emotions, e.g. anger, shame, exuberance of positive emotions.

Expulsion and suspension can pathologize child behavior and increase disparities.
Knowledge in Child Developed Needed

Workforce needs knowledge and skills to

- Understand how children’s emotional responses may reflect cultural expectations and learning
- Communicate classroom expectations in a child’s first language
- Support social-emotional learning
- Examine their own cultural socialization and practices
- Distinguish concerning behaviors from developmentally appropriate behaviors

NSECE study found only 20% of providers reported receiving training on facilitating social-emotional growth in the past year
Driver 3: Racial Disparities in Discipline
Understanding Racial Disparities in Discipline and Expulsion Rates

Disproportionate levels of discipline by race

Mixed impact when background information on familial stressors is made available

At kindergarten entry, Black and White parents equally rated their children’s persistence, approaches to learning, and social interactions, but teachers rated Black students as having a distinct disadvantage relative to White students

Underprepared early learning teachers are more likely to use punitive and rejecting disciplinary techniques
Bias as One Explanation for Racial Disparities

**Above the Surface:**
Conscious/Reflective effortful, slow, logical, calculating, limited resources

**Below the Surface:**
Unconscious/Reflex automatic, fast, intuitively-driven, emotional stereotypic, large resources
Bias as One Explanation for Racial Disparities

https://nyti.ms/2jSAhZe
Other Related Explanations

Cultural discontinuity
Negotiating conflict cross-culturally
Goodness-of-fit
Lower expectations
Perception of threat
“Protection” from harsh world / preparation for bias
Explicit bias
Driver 4: Trauma Behavior Connection

Approximately 10 to 14 percent of children from birth to age 5 experience emotional, relational, or behavioral disturbance.

Children experiencing trauma arrive at school less ready to learn.

Exposure to violence can diminish concentration, memory, organizational, and language abilities.

Quality of early learning settings is *even more* important.
Why does this feel complex?

Subjectivity in what behavior is considered challenging
Many types of exclusionary practices
Program characteristics may provoke or contribute to children’s behaviors
Increased understanding of why racial disparities exist
Lack of supports for an underprepared workforce
How do we know if our strategy is reducing and preventing exclusionary practices?
To answer this question...

Consider the policy options for a state strategy
Explore the “4 P’s” of Data
Learn from Colorado and Arkansas
POSSIBLE COMPONENTS OF A STATE STRATEGY

Goal
- Governance
- State Goals and Road Map
- Data

Policy
- State Policy & Protocols on Expulsion
- Policies related to Program Characteristics
- Child Care Assistance
- Work Conditions

Supports
- Hotline/Triage
- Training & Coaching
- IECMH Consultation
- QRIS
- Alignment of TA Providers

Services
- Developmental Screening & Referral
- Early Intervention & Special Education
- Health, Mental Health, and Family Support

Cross-cutting: Family Partnerships and Racial & Gender Equity
What impact are we trying to measure?

• Shifting attitudes from “the child is doing something wrong...” to “what is the child’s behavior trying to tell me?”

• Changing adults to ask: What is my role? What is being triggered in me? What could I be doing differently? Where can I get additional help and reflections?

• Measuring changes in adult and child behavior.
Types of Data

Prevalence
Program
Process
Progress
Prevalence

Establishing a baseline to measure change

Identifying trends

- **Children characteristics**: race, gender, age, home language, disability, behaviors of concern, etc.

- **Program characteristics**: type of program, ratios, class/group size, length of program day, QRIS rating, participation in PD, access ECMH consultation, staff well-being and work conditions, etc.

Addressing soft expulsion

- Implication for how you ask about exclusionary practices
Program

Developmentally appropriate practices, e.g. schedule, routines, transitions, learning centers, toys, curriculum, building relationships

Teaching social-emotional skills and responding to common challenging behaviors

Staff feeling supported and competent in responding to children

Supporting children with more significant concerns
Process

What support was delivered
Who delivered the support
To whom they delivered the support

For example
◦ # of referrals
◦ Where referral came from
◦ Who were they assigned
◦ Status of case completion
◦ Dose of intervention (type and how long, etc.).
Progress

Program & staff outcomes
- Changes in program policies and practices
- Changes in staff/teacher knowledge and skills
- Changes in staff/teacher well-being, satisfaction
- Extent of communication and partnerships with families
- Supporting children in program

Child & family outcomes
- Changes in social emotional knowledge and skills
- Changes in presenting behaviors
- Connections to additional supports
- If transitioned out of the program, changes in type or quality of care

Improve effectiveness of supports over time
Introduction to Colorado
Colorado’s long approach to social emotional support for young children in child care
Colorado’s effort and course of action

2016: Child Care Rule Revisions were adopted
How providers are supported to improve practices around social emotional development
Methods and approaches to reducing suspensions & expulsion
Improving partnerships with families when children present with challenging behaviors.

Pushback from providers during public comment on collecting real-time data on expulsions
“Providers must:
• Cultivate positive child, staff, family relationships,
• Create and maintain a socially & emotionally respectful care environment,
• Implement teaching strategies to support positive behavior and S/E competence,
• Convene a team based approach to reducing challenging behaviors and preventing suspensions & expulsion
• Demonstrate access to ECMH consultant or other specialist as needed.”
What the licensing unit tell us:

- Grateful for the attention to S/E, but we don’t know how to advise
- Inspectors may not be up to date on latest science of attachment, trauma, support
- Questions about remediation of violation: what’s in a good plan?
State system support
Long history of early childhood mental health consultation in Colorado

• Pilots first legislated in 1997
  • Early evaluation focus on the concept of expulsions
• 2006 State funded (general funds) for 17 FTE
• Kid Connects: Boulder, CO
  • What Works 2008
• Early evaluation interest on ecmhc to mitigate risk of expulsion
Capitalizing on National Momentum

Granted legislative spending authority for CCDF to double the size of our state’s consultation program to 34 FTE
Colorado’s Planned Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age, Gender, Race</td>
<td>Baseline CHILD© to inform practice</td>
<td>Utilizations including time spent in classrooms, activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QRIS rating</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Referral Source</td>
<td>Pre-post assessments of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for referral</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Case closure</td>
<td>• CHILD©</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Suspension/expulsion survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• DECA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Risk of expulsion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Expulsion Outcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Prevalence
- Program
- Process
- Progress
Introduction to Arkansas
Arkansas’s Efforts to Reduce Suspension and Expulsion

Plan development
Roll-out of new policy and ‘BehaviorHelp’ triage and support system
Experience/data/lessons learned to date
# Arkansas Expulsion and Suspension Workgroup

**Influenced by federal guidance**

**Multi-disciplinary Workgroup**

First meeting held on January 7, 2015.

### Internal to DHS/DCCECE:
- Licensing
- QRIS
- State-funded Pre-K Program
- CCDF Unit/Family Support

### External Partners:
- DHS Division of Behavioral Health
- Professional Development Contractors (trainers, TA, ECMHC)
- Experienced ECE Professionals
- Special Education
- Head Start Collaboration
- Project Launch
Fair and Appropriate Policies

Strong Family Partnerships

Universal developmental and behavioral monitoring, screening, and follow-up

Setting goals and tracking data

Access to specialized consultation

High-Skilled Workforce
New Policies & Supports

Longstanding DHS/DCCECE policy limits suspension and expulsion for children enrolled in state pre-k programs

◦ “No child shall be expelled without permission from the DCCECE”
◦ New monitoring and support efforts started in 2015; expanded in 2016

Similar policy rolled out July 1, 2016 for programs receiving child care vouchers
Informed by the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children

Source: Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning, www.vanderbilt.csefel.edu
You Can’t Ask for What You Don’t Know
You Need

Challenges:
◦ Perception that the ‘problem’ lies within the child
◦ Little understanding of connection between behavior and child’s experiences/environment
◦ Belief that _____ won’t work with THIS child

Identified need for single point of entry and on-site support
Identifying Providers of Specialized Supports

Who is going on-site that knows about:

- Developmentally appropriate practice
- Teaching social-emotional skills
- Responding to common behavioral challenges
- Supporting children and families with more significant behavioral and emotional concerns

Identified TA providers and ECMH Consultants
Tier 3: Behavior frequent and extreme and/or identified trauma history or multi-system involvement;
   Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Tier 2: Behavior described as more serious and/or teacher frustration is high;
   Short term TA by team of experts in developmentally appropriate practice and/or social-emotional supports

Tier 1: Concerns described sound developmentally normal and frustration is not excessively high;
   DCCECE Specialists share information and resources

Provider/Parent complete online form and interview with DCCECE staff

Development of Individualized Teacher Training Plan As Needed
Triage Specialists

Staff of the DHS/Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

All have other roles (family support, pre-k specialist, etc.)

Receive online requests for support and complete structured phone interview

Provide support or assign to TA or ECMHC

Attend weekly staffing with TA and ECMHC leadership
Data Gathering in Triage

What do we know about the **center** (licensing history, QRIS rating, type of center)?

What do we know about the **teacher** (training, experience, how long with child, etc.)?

**What else** are we hearing (frustration level, ‘red flags’ related to behavior management, etc.)?

What is known about the **child/family** (child care history, behavior, difficult experiences, etc.)
Technical Assistance

Provided by professional with experience in developmentally appropriate practice and strategies to support social-emotional development

Services are flexible and short-term (usually 2-10 visits)

Focused on building skills of teacher and creating a more supportive classroom environment
Mental Health Consultation

Provided by licensed mental health professional

Visits occur 1 to 2 times per week for 3 months

- Meet with parent/teacher/director
- Observe and assess child in the classroom setting.
- With teacher, develop individual child behavior and classroom management plans.
- Screenings and referrals for community resources for child/family.
- Support teacher in implementation of support plan.
- Provide support for the well-being of the teacher/director
Planned Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Surveys on suspension</td>
<td>• TPOT</td>
<td>• Utilization by child and center demographic</td>
<td>• Teacher satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and expulsion practices</td>
<td>• Case closure</td>
<td>• Referral type</td>
<td>• Expulsion outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Surveys on challenging</td>
<td>consultant</td>
<td>• Service records</td>
<td>• Pre-post assessment of behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behavior in classrooms</td>
<td>feedback</td>
<td>• Teacher experience</td>
<td>• Consultant perception of progress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


First Activity
Debrief Activity
Break
Where is Colorado’s story today?
ECMH Consultation by Level of Focus

N=1548

- Program: 51%
- Classroom: 38%
- Child: 11%
Top Themes of Consultation Focus based on PreK CHILD© Results

- Transitions
- Directions & Rules
- Social and Emotional...
- Staff Awareness
- Staff Affect
- Staff Cooperation
- Staff-Child Interactions
- Individualized and...
- Child Behaviors
Number of EMCH child-focused cases by age group

N = 1643

- 74%
- 19%
- 7%

- 0 to 3
- 3 to 6
- 6 and Over
Gender of CO children

Census Data 2016 American Community Survey
Children referred for ECMHC services

- Females
- Males
At Risk on Entry by Gender by White / Non White

Yes
- White: Male 153, Female 49
- Non White: Male 38, Female 14

No
- White: Male 389, Female 203
- Non White: Male 67, Female 36
Change in Risk Status for those at Risk of Expulsion on Entry

- Decreased Risk: 66%
- Increased Risk: 4%
- Still At Risk: 30%
How CO uses the data?

**Prevalence**: We will use expulsion survey data to establish baseline rates and eventually look changes in rates

**Program**: Informing training needs for providers based on trends in classrooms assessments

**Process**: Looks at utilizations, activities. Have used data from the last 18 months to establish a model for CO’s ECMHC

**Progress**: Making the case for continued and expanded investments for ECMHC. This is important for both public and private funds.
LIMITATION

Race & ethnicity of children, staff & parents

Suspensions- How to quantify?

Differential adherence to child care rules:
◦ ( i.e.: What does access to a mental health consultant really mean?)
The next horizon for CO’s data system

• Adding a “Close date” for services 😊
• Data analysis reports: what do utilizations tell us about impact and change (dosage & intensity)
• What works for who under what conditions?
• Capturing missing time away from work / school for parents (important 2gen factor)
• Info on tie to licensing policies
Key activities just underway:

- Administering CO Suspension & Expulsion mixed methods study
- Working with licensing to develop guidance to use on initial visits to guide policy planning
- Requiring course on *Impact of Bias* for all CO consultants
Where is Arkansas story today?
BehaviorHelp

Data and Lessons Learned
July, 2016 – June 2018
Prevalence of Problem

57% called parent (past month)

43% suspended or expelled

9% expelled
Program data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities to Strengthen Supportive Practice</th>
<th>Percent of Classrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitions are chaotic</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No posted/illustrated rules or expectations</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions are never or rarely discussed in classroom</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No visual schedule</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers never or rarely support children in managing anger</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher never or rarely support children in learning to solve problems</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers never or rarely join in children’s play</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Process Data
BehaviorHelp Referrals by Month (n = 626)
BEHAVIORHELP REFERRALS BY AGE

- 1: 2%
- 2: 3%
- 3: 15%
- 4: 36%
- 5: 38%
- >5: 6%
White Males Majority of Those Referred

- White/Non-Hispanic: 63%
- African-American: 28%
- Hispanic: 5%
- Multi-racial: 4%

- Male: 82%
- Female: 18%
Behavior Description

- Destroy's Property: 56.3%
- Frequent Crying: 39.6%
- Acts younger than age: 39.6%
- Hurts others: 93.8%
- Hurts self: 29.8%
- Won't sit still: 57.4%
- Won't interact with staff: 66.0%
- Difficulty following routines: 17.4%
- Other: 29.2%
Trauma

37% known at intake
52% known by case closure

- Parent behavioral health
- Foster care
- Parental incarceration
- Abuse/neglect
- Parental divorce
- Domestic violence in home
- Loss of bved one
- Serious illness/injury

- 9.8%
- 9.5%
- 8.7%
- 7.7%
- 7.4%
- 3.4%
- 2.4%
- 1.3%
BehaviorHelp Triage

- 70% Technical Assistance
- 25% Mental Health Consultation
- 5% Both
• Teacher received help in a reasonable amount of time after making Help Request.

• BehaviorHelp staff respected teacher’s knowledge/opinions.

• Teacher feels better able to manage behavior concerns because of support received.
Progress Data
Case Closed!

- Remaining in center: 71%
- Expelled: 5%
- Planned transfer: 6%
- Parent withdrew child: 9%
- Child aged out/moved/other: 9%
Child Behavior

- Average child externalizing behaviors were well above the clinically significant range at pre-test.
- The frequency of the behaviors decreased significantly from pre-post test.
I would describe my partnership with the BehaviorHelp team as rewarding and educational. My coach helped me with ideas for the classroom, ways to communicate with my parents, and she showed me some techniques I used personally. I would recommend the BehaviorHelp team to any of my colleagues.

Participants said they would use BehaviorHelp again and would recommend BehaviorHelp to other teachers.
How We Are Using the Data

2 years in.....

Process data has helped us understand provider utilization patterns and drives conversations around staffing and outreach efforts

Program data is helping us identify training needs for ECE professionals in the state

Progress data has helped us advocate to continue and expand

Prevalence data....too soon to tell!
Behavior Help Online
An electronic behavior help tool for The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

Submit a Request

Sign-in

If you are already a registered user, click here to sign in. Otherwise, Contact your administrator to get an account.

Sign in

Research-Based Behavioral Intervention

There are research proven ways to prevent suspension and expulsion:
- Train teachers to support social-emotional development.
- Access early childhood mental health consultation.
- Develop strong relationships with families.

Behavior Help can do just that!
Support Request

Child Care Program Information

Center Name: 

Center Address: 

Center City: 

Center County: 

School District: 

Better Beginnings level: Select
# Support Specialist

## Pending Requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Center Name</th>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Assign</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOS</td>
<td>Test Site 700</td>
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</table>

Create New Request

## Open Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Center Name</th>
<th>Assigned</th>
<th>Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>504</td>
<td>Test Site 100</td>
<td>DCCECE</td>
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</table>

*Include assigned* below the searchbar to display assigned cases.
Center: **Test Site 700**  
Case #: 506

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening forms</th>
<th>Closing forms</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Request</td>
<td>SDQ Post</td>
<td>Case Transfer Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Behavior Help Closure Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDQ</td>
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<td>TPITOS</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Behavior Observation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BH Site Visit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BH Strategy Plan</td>
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Data System Lessons

Who are your users?

Pilot/Refine your data elements before building database

Allow time for discussion of data sharing needs, data sharing agreements and privacy issues

Expect delays

Train, Train, Train - helping professionals are not research staff

Budget for change
Activity
Debrief and Closing
Reflections

Prevalence, Program, Process, Progress

Start where you have momentum or what you need first

Use data
  ◦ To get the supports programs need
  ◦ To support CQI and better target supports
  ◦ To make the case for expansion of programming

Look at the data you have & other places to get data, e.g. parents

Always give data analysis to those who gave you data
Contact Information

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