



# A Holistic Approach to Ending Exclusionary Discipline for Young Learners

**A REVIEW OF THE DATA, RESEARCH,  
AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL SOLUTIONS**

**Rosemarie Allen, EdD**

The Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University  
Metropolitan State University of Denver

**Shantel Meek, PhD**

The Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University

**Brittany Alexander, PhD**

The Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University

**Cinthia Palomino, PhD**

The Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University

**Darielle Blevins, PhD**

The Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University

**Evandra Catherine, PhD**

The Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University

**Kent McIntosh, PhD**

University of Oregon

**Mary Louise Hemmeter, PhD**

Vanderbilt University

**Tunette Powell, PhD**

The Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University

**Xigrd Soto-Boykin, PhD**

The Children's Equity Project, Arizona State University

**CHILDREN'S EQUITY  
PROJECT**

# Introduction

Every year, families make the difficult choice of finding optimal care for their children. The quest for the perfect child care setting sometimes begins while the child is still in utero. Families consider the overall environment, the number of children and teachers in the classroom, the experience of the teacher, and the cost of care. Many Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other families of color also consider cultural and linguistic representation when searching for ideal care. What may not be considered is the possibility of the child being kicked out of their child care facility sometimes as early as infancy. Sadly, suspensions and expulsions in the early years occur at astounding rates: they happen often, start early, and are applied disproportionately to Black children, children with disabilities, American Indian and Alaska Native children, and boys.

Preschool suspension is a short term removal of a child from the school for one or more days. Expulsion is the permanent termination of the child from their early childhood program (American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on School Health, 2013).

We know, and consistently laud, the benefits of a high quality early childhood setting for young children (Yoshikawa et al., 2013). It has been proven that participation in a high quality early childhood program results in long term benefits for all children, specifically Black children and those living in poverty (Garcia et al., 2021; Weiland & Yoshikawa, 2013). Benefits include increased rates of high school completion, higher college graduation rates, better salaries, and greater overall

**Preschool suspension is a short term removal of a child from the school for one or more days. Expulsion is the permanent termination of the child from their early childhood program.**

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS  
COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL HEALTH, 2013**

**Single solution responses to a complex, multidimensional problem are simply insufficient.**

life outcomes (Bustamante et al., 2022). Research consistently shows the long term benefits of quality early childhood programs on the lives of children who have been historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and maligned in our society (Bustamante et al., 2022).

Not only has the promise of early childhood programs been broken, the practice of suspending young children is detrimental to their well-being and leads to negative outcomes (Meek & Gilliam, 2016). Suspended children are often labeled, stigmatized, socially isolated, and separated from their peers (Rosenbaum, 2018). Suspensions are not effective in improving behavior or increasing academic outcomes. In fact, exclusionary discipline places a child at risk for long-term negative outcomes, including grade retention, disengagement from school, lower academic success and increased risk for entering the juvenile justice system (American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health, 2013; Arcia, 2006; Gregory et al., 2010).

For over ten years, the early care and education field has been aware of the high rates and stark racial disparities in exclusionary discipline. The federal government has issued guidance (though it was subsequently revoked), and many states and local districts have implemented policies to mitigate these harmful practices. Decision makers have invested in expanding access to social emotional supports, including approaches like infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC). Providers have engaged in professional development on this issue. Still, much of these actions have been piecemeal, rarely implemented as a holistic, comprehensive approach, and importantly, most efforts have lacked a focus on addressing disparities in expulsion and suspension.

Single solution responses to a complex, multidimensional problem are simply insufficient. This brief will review the state of the data on early childhood exclusion, summarize research on systemic drivers of these practices, and present a holistic, multidimensional framework to consider in addressing and eliminating suspensions and expulsions, and racial disparities in such practices.

# A Review of the Data

Nearly 20 years ago, the first preschool suspension data were published, showing that preschool children were suspended three times more than those in kindergarten through 12th grade. The study also found that Black children were expelled twice as often as White children and up to ten times as much as Asian children (Gilliam, 2005). Subsequent studies confirmed these early findings. In 2014, the United States Department of Education released the results of its Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) that for the first time included preschool data (United States Department of Education, 2014). Data indicated that approximately 5,000 preschoolers were suspended at least once. The data also revealed that Black children, who comprise only 18 percent of the preschool population, make up nearly half of preschool suspensions (United States Department of Education, 2014). Subsequent CRDC releases in 2016, 2018, and 2020 showed decreased suspension rates, but stark, consistent racial disparities, with Black children being disparately impacted each year.

In preschool, Indigenous children, multiracial children, and children with disabilities are also disproportionately suspended. When broken down by gender, Indigenous, Black, and Multiracial boys were overrepresented in suspensions and expulsions, however, the data for girls revealed only Black girls were overrepresented. Preschoolers with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be excluded and account for over half of expulsions (Office of Civil Rights,

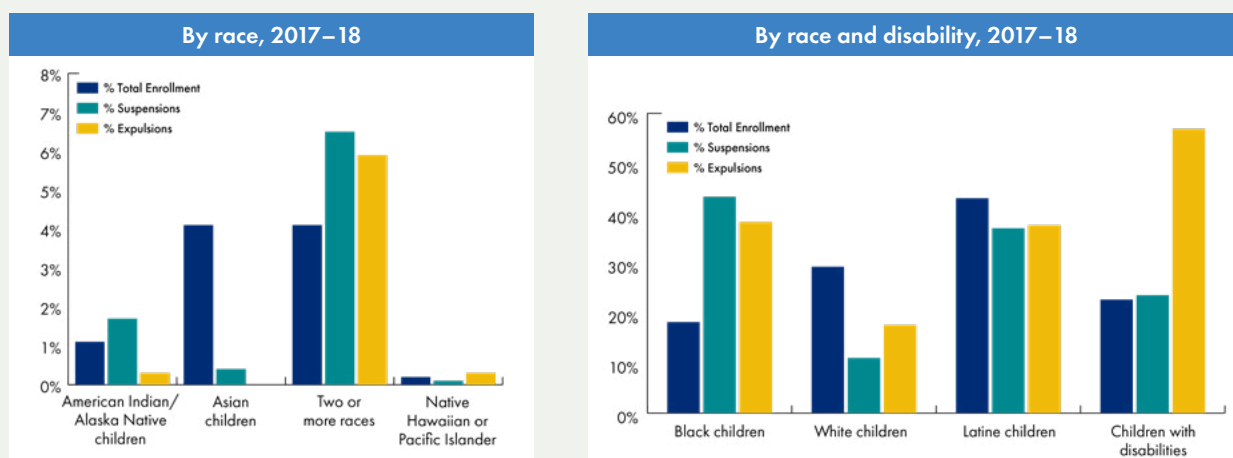
2021). Suspension studies conducted at the state level have yielded similar results, indicating high rates of suspension (Hoover et al., 2012; Greenberg & Ash, 2012; Kalinowski & Kalinowski, 2011; Martin et al., 2018). Data for many of these state studies are not disaggregated by race, unfortunately, but where they are, racial disparities are documented in line with federal data (Greenberg & Ash, 2012).

Other state research reveals exclusionary discipline in even younger children. A survey conducted in Illinois reported that more than 40 percent of the State’s child care programs had suspended infants and toddlers (Cutler & Gilkerson, 2002). In North Dakota, 20% of providers expelled children from child care facilities, and of those expelled, 53% were infants and toddlers (North Dakota State Data Center, 2008).

These data do not include exclusionary discipline practices that are not formally categorized or reported as suspensions or expulsions, often referred to as ‘soft suspensions’. Soft suspensions are practices that exclude a child from the learning process without explicitly and formally suspending or expelling them. This could manifest by sending a child to the director’s or principal’s office or to another classroom, isolating a child from their peers, denying participation in activities such as a field trip or party, repeatedly asking parents to pick their children up early, or pressuring families to disenroll their children (Allen, 2022; Zinsser et al., 2019).

**FIGURE 1 PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT, SUSPENSIONS, AND EXPULSIONS**

We present two different scales to more clearly display disproportionality in groups with smaller relative populations.



# Diagnosing Systemic Drivers of Disparities

Exclusionary discipline practices are complex and cannot be attributed to a single factor. Factors that are believed to contribute to suspensions and expulsions of young children include lack of teacher training on supporting young children's social emotional development; racism and implicit or explicit bias; inadequate, poorly designed and implemented exclusion policies; lack of accountability for excluding children; adult and child mental health; and poor overall working conditions for teachers and providers, including large class sizes, inadequate breaks, low compensation and no benefits, and subpar poor quality facilities and physical environments.

## Implicit Bias and Anti-Black Racism

Suspensions and expulsions happen to children across every racial/ethnic group. But, consistently, over time and across systems, states, types of harsh discipline, and child ages, Black children are disproportionately affected and harmed (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Exclusion of Black children from American schools is not new. Since the creation of the country, Black children have been excluded from and not afforded the opportunity to engage in the learning process. Laws prohibited those who were enslaved and Black people who were free from engaging in any educational activities, including reading and writing (Erickson, 1997). Following the 13th Amendment, when slavery was prohibited, newly freed African Americans began to build schools to educate their population. Separate but equal laws profoundly impacted the educational resources Black communities could access. Desegregation orders resulted in Black children being bussed into formerly all white schools, at the protest of many white parents, teachers, and policymakers. Over time, exclusion has taken many forms. Today, and over the past fifty years, part of that form is expulsions and suspensions disproportionately applied to Black children.

Personal implicit and explicit biases are also associated with exclusionary discipline (Allen & Gilliam, in press). Implicit biases are unconscious beliefs and associations that influence how we see, treat, and interact with others. Implicit bias shapes our perceptions of people and supports stereotypes through unconscious messages that are received over the course of our lifetime (Eberhardt, 2019). Research finds that teachers perceive Black children as more aggressive than white children engaging in the same behavior, as needing less care and nurturing (in the case of Black girls), and hold lower expectations for Black children than white children (Dunham, 2011; Gilliam et al., 2016; Morris, 2016; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). Further, teachers are more likely to recommend exclusion for Black children with a previous behavior referral than white children and to view them as "troublemakers" (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015), an internal rather than external or situational (e.g. they are tired or having a bad day) attribution.

Research beyond the classroom has found that Black boys are viewed as less innocent than their white peers and are thought to be 4.5 years older, even by teachers who understand child development (Goff et al., 2014). Research has found that Black girls are believed to need less nurturing, less compassion, and less comfort than white girls the same age (Epstein et al., 2019). Black girls are also more likely to receive corporal punishment and are often labeled as aggressive, defiant, and non-compliant (Morris, 2016; Onyeka-Crawford et al., 2017).

It is critical to note that there are no credible data that indicates that Black children simply behave worse or demonstrate more frequent misbehavior (Scott et al., 2019). This area of research relies largely on teacher's perceptions of children's behavior, which is influenced by implicit bias (Zimmermann, 2018). The plethora of research on bias, however, including differential perceptions of behavior, empathy, expectations, and scrutiny, among others, point to the role of bias in exclusionary discipline disparities.

## Inadequate Professional Development

Inadequate professional preparation and in-service supports also contribute to harsh discipline and its disproportionate application. Research finds that teachers are ill prepared to address the behaviors they find challenging in their classrooms and are often completely unprepared to acknowledge, identify, and combat their own biases (Hemmeter et al., 2006). When children exhibit behaviors teachers label as defiant or oppositional, they feel powerless, and may experience a sense of hopelessness (Irwin-Vitela, 2010). Researchers have found that teachers fear the child's behavior may not improve and express concern that the child will continue to disrupt the classroom or even hurt themselves or other children, which may impact their job (Gilliam et al., 2018). When these behaviors persist, feelings of anger, frustration, and hostility may be developed toward the child. Children whose teachers deem them as impulsive, who are perceived to lack control or restraint, and those who are labeled inattentive, are also disproportionately suspended and expelled from early childhood programs (Gilliam, 2005; Gilliam & Reyes, 2018). These negative perceptions are exacerbated for children with suspected or identified disabilities, particularly those who are Black, Latine, and/or American Indian (Gage et al., 2019; Novoa & Malik, 2018). These adult perceptions, feelings, and behaviors can interfere with the implementation of practices designed to positively support children's behavior (Keat, 2008; Quesenberry et al., 2014).

A fundamental misunderstanding of child development and age appropriate behavioral expectations, rooted in inadequate professional preparation, contributes to harsh and exclusionary discipline. Research shows the reasons for early childhood suspensions are often for behaviors that are not within a child's control and for skills that have not yet been developed. For example, infants are usually suspended and expelled for excessive crying and biting and children's undeveloped spatial awareness or rough play may be perceived as aggressive and lead to exclusion. Further, some children are labeled disruptive for giving answers without raising their hand or interjecting an experience while the teacher is reading a book. These mis-labeled behaviors can end with the child being removed from the classroom (Graham, n.d.).

Additionally, preservice teacher education programs rarely include coursework on social emotional development or managing behaviors teachers find challenging (Hemmeter, et al., 2008). For example, out of 304 teacher preparation programs across the nation, only 13% had at least one required course covering some type of SEL content (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Teachers express frustration and feel unprepared when a child engages in externalizing behaviors such as defiance, impulsivity, explosive tantrums, and being disruptive (Perry, et al., 2010). However, when teachers receive the training, support, and tools they need to address these concerning behaviors, exclusionary incidents decrease (Gilliam, et al., 2006; Sugai & Horner, 2006).

Finally, teacher preparation and professional development on bias is sorely lacking. Disciplinary decisions are made based on adults' perception of children — which is malleable. Training that focuses on teaching adults how to deal with biases and the impact of bias on perception, expectations, and decision making are central to addressing this issue (Allen, 2021). Exercises that include de-biasing activities can reduce implicit bias (Devine et al., 2012). Other research has found that professional development based on building empathy is associated with reductions in exclusionary discipline (Okonofua et al., 2016; Okonofua et al., 2022).

## Bad Policy and Lacking Accountability

Policy and accountability, or lack thereof, also contribute to exclusionary discipline. Over the past five decades, the policy pendulum on exclusionary discipline has swung several times. In the 1990s, Congress enacted the Gun-Free Schools Act, which required states to create laws to expel students who bring guns on school grounds (Sughrue, 2003). The law served as the impetus of rigid "Zero Tolerance Policies" (ZTP) in America's schools (Sughrue, 2003), in which schools and districts created harsh, predetermined, mandatory consequences for infractions deemed harmful or threatening (American Psychological Association [APA] Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). Though these policies started as consequences to a narrow set of infractions (e.g. bringing guns to school), they soon ballooned into exclusions for a host of minor, subjective, non-violent infractions, like dress code violations or behavioral incidents in line with developmentally appropriate tantrums.



Today, there is no federal law on exclusionary discipline of young children, though the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act requires states to report their expulsion policies. Additional bills have been proposed by various Congressional committees, but most address K–12 systems (Meek et al., 2020). Many states have some restrictions placed on exclusionary discipline, most commonly limiting the number of days children can be excluded, the types of behaviors children can be excluded for, and the ages at which children can be excluded. In addition, many states have preventive or supportive measures in place (Alexander et al., in press).

Federal data indicate that between the 2016–2017 and 2018–2019 school years, the rate of preschool suspension fell by nearly 50%. While this is an important and noteworthy improvement, it is also true that disparities between white and Black students did not meaningfully change and remained stark. This points to the need to move beyond focusing on decreasing exclusionary discipline in general, to specifically developing policy to address disparities in discipline, specifically. To date, the vast amount of policy movement has been almost exclusively focused on decreasing the rates of exclusionary discipline, particularly in young children. Very few states implemented any meaningful policy directed at decreasing disparities. Thus, the data indicating decrease in rates and no change in disparities, are not surprising, but informative to decision makers in developing a new era of policy to address disproportionality in harsh discipline.

In early childhood systems, many programs have no policies at all, making decisions to exclude entirely subjective and offering no protections to children, especially those who are more likely to be harmed by such practices. At the state level, many have implemented various policies around exclusionary discipline in child care settings, though very few have limited or prohibited the practice. Some states have implemented policies around data collection, communicating with families, ensuring access to social emotional support, or offering professional development on related issues (Meek et al., 2020). The vast majority of policies in the early childhood system, though well intentioned, lack data, monitoring, and accountability structures, limiting their effectiveness in protecting children and supporting workers.

## Low Pay, No Benefits, and Poor Working Conditions for Early Educators

Children’s social emotional wellness is negatively impacted when teachers are working under stressful conditions and in adverse environments. Early childhood teachers are amongst the lowest paid in the teacher workforce (McLean et al., 2021). The 2018 United States Labor Statistics Report showed the median annual salary for early childhood teachers was less than \$24,000. Regardless of education and experience, Black early childhood teachers are paid nearly a dollar less per hour than white teachers. These wage gaps vary depending on the age of the children, the source of funding, and the race of the teacher (Austin, et al., 2019). Many qualify for government subsidies, struggle with emotional and psychological well-being and are subjected to some of the worst working conditions in the industry (McLean et al., 2021). Early childhood workers are also less likely to have medical and sick leave benefits, essential resources, and are often subjected to unfavorable work conditions that impact their emotional and psychological well being (Kwon, et. al, 2019; Whitaker, et al., 2015).

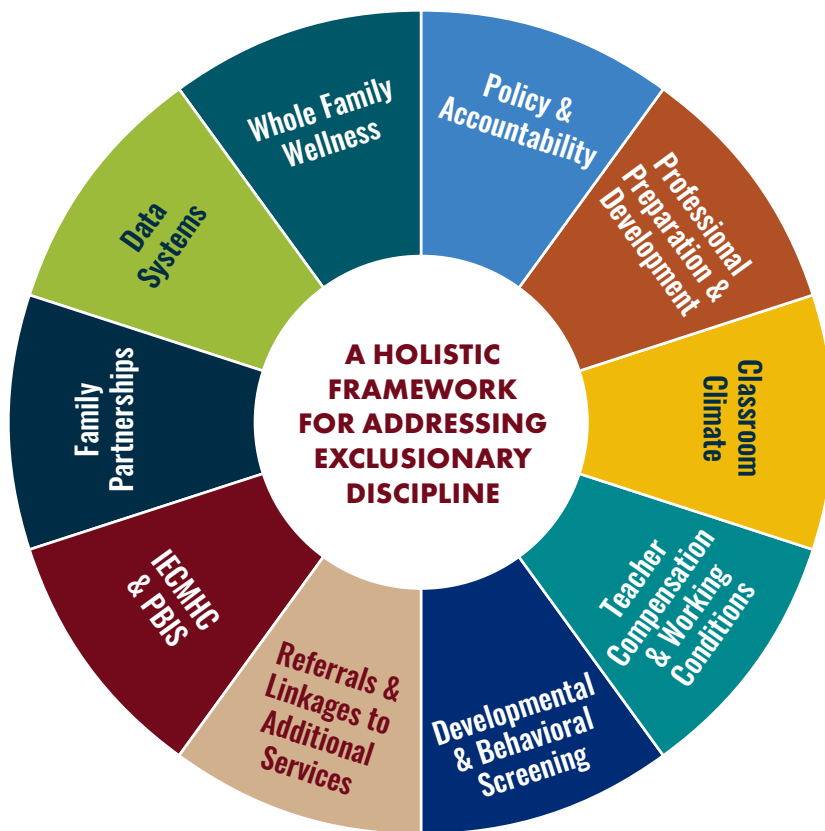
Early childhood teachers often work long hours with few breaks, manage large classes with high ratios, and are provided little support to perform their duties at optimal levels, causing stress and feelings of inefficacy. Turnover rates are higher than the general population and there are few opportunities to receive coaching, mentoring, and professional development activities (Otten, et al., 2019). Staff shortages have rendered many early childhood facilities unsustainable and are stretching current workers beyond their mental and physical capacities (Kwon, et al., 2021 b). This level of dysfunction in early childhood workspaces is leading to high stress, depression, and chronic illnesses amongst early childhood professionals.

The most critical predictor of an emotionally and psychologically supportive classroom is the mental health of the early childhood teacher. Research has documented an association between the teachers’ mental health and the quality of teacher-child interactions. For instance, teachers who experience stress and feelings of depression are less emotionally available to children and less capable of providing social and emotional support (Buettner et al., 2016; Hamre & Pianta, 2004; Koles et al., 2013). This in turn, can make it more difficult for children to form secure attachments and regulate their own behavior (Kwon et al., 2022).

# A Holistic Framework

## TO ADDRESS RATES AND DISPARITIES IN SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Exclusionary discipline is a multidimensional problem. It is associated with an array of negative outcomes for children. It places families, especially working families, in difficult situations and causes stress. And it causes stress to teachers, who did not enter the field with desires to exclude children. Previous efforts to address this complex problem have often been unidimensional. Too often, the solution is lackluster policy with little accountability or professional development. Factors that influence the stressful conditions under which exclusions occur, like large class sizes and workforce compensation, are usually left out of the conversation altogether. Here, we provide a holistic 10-part framework for addressing exclusionary discipline that policymakers can use to make meaningful progress in eliminating the rates and disparities in exclusionary discipline.



### 1 Develop Policy with Accountability Systems

Good policy is not exclusively the answer to addressing discipline rates and disparities, but it is undoubtedly a critical part of the answer. The policy efforts implemented in the past ten years have been significant and meaningful, but incomplete. In order to make greater progress, policies must be more expansive than they have been. All policies to date have been exclusively focused on reducing the rate of early exclusion, and have failed to address the stark, consistent disparities noted in the data. Most policies have been narrow in scope, applying to only one sector of the broader system that serves young children (e.g. public pre-K). In addition, most policies have not prohibited early exclusions, they have only limited their use in certain age groups, for various types of behaviors, or in the number of days children are allowed to be excluded. Finally, almost all policies lack coordinated data systems, monitoring, and accountability. This weakens protections, and can diminish the effectiveness of policies altogether. A more holistic policy includes:

- A prohibition of exclusionary discipline across the systems that serve young children (e.g. child care, public pre-K, early grades), with exceptions only in rare circumstances that involve an objective, immediate, and

serious safety threat and with a commitment to supporting families to find a more suitable placement.

- Data collection requirements that include multiple reporters (i.e. families, teachers, administrators, mental health consultants), across all forms of exclusion, and requirements to interpret and use data to inform policy and professional development.
- Monitoring and accountability systems that track exclusions, deploy support where needed, and establish corrective action plans to protect children.
- Requirements to track disparities in use across groups (by race, language, and disability), deploy supports to address root causes, and establish disparity corrective action plans to address lack of progress on bridging gaps.
- Positive behavioral interventions and supports systems at the program and state levels that include tiered approaches to supporting children and teachers and detailed steps to prevent exclusion, including accessing early childhood mental health consultation or other social emotional promotional approaches.
- A detailed description of the conditions under which planned transitions can and should occur, that include joint family-program decision making, screening for additional services, support from mental health consultants, and a warm hand off to a different program.
- Requirements for professional preparation and development, including entry level credentials and continuing education work, that include a focus on child development, bias and its effects on adults' perceptions of behavior and discipline decisions, and securing strong partnerships with diverse families.

It is important to note that policy in exclusionary discipline can exist across many levels, including federal, state, district, city, and program levels. In fact, in most cases, exclusionary discipline is managed locally or programmatically. In many cases, policies across levels will be layered and include different dimensions. Because of this complexity, it is critical for states to bring together the many players across early childhood systems to ensure consistency in policy across levels and, critically, in implementation. State technical assistance on holistic, positive policy development and accountability, considering the factors discussed here, could help ensure alignment in expectations and support, and improved outcomes for children.

## 2 Focus and Enhance Preparation Systems and Ongoing Professional Development on Content to Reduce Harsh Discipline

To decrease the prevalence of exclusionary discipline in early childhood, preparation and development systems must include focused content on social emotional development, classroom management, and bias in their core curriculum (e.g., Wymer et al, 2022). Today, too much of this content is optional and is infrequently part of the base curriculum. For professional development support to be effective, it should be ongoing and focused, and it should include observation, reflection and feedback in the practice setting (e.g., Snyder et al., 2015). Preparation systems and credentialing at all levels, including entry level credentials, and associate's, bachelor's, and advanced degrees, as well as in-service professional development (e.g., training, coaching, and consultation) should deeply cover, as a base:

### A. CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Many children are suspended for engaging in typical behaviors that are consistent with their development and age. In these cases there is an expectation gap, where the adult's expectations of the child are disconnected from their developmental capability (Zinsser et al., 2022). Deeply understanding the stages of development can help adults create appropriate expectations. Activities that promote children's impulse control and self-regulation are also key to preventing suspensions and expulsions. It is important that early childhood professionals avoid penalizing children for simply being children through improved understanding of child development. It is also important to understand that development may be slower or faster for children with disabilities, which should also influence behavioral expectations (Zeng et al, 2021).

### B. ANTI-BIAS, ANTI-RACIST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Anti-bias, anti-racist professional development. It is important to note that Black children do not behave worse than non-Black children; yet, despite this fact, stark disparities in harsh discipline exist. A robust body of research has found that adult perceptions of child behavior are associated with race; that



Black children are more closely “watched” and their behavior scrutinized more, and that Black children are more likely to be excluded for the same behavior, compared to their white peers. Supporting the early childhood workforce through professional development on the history and legacy of racism and the impact of implicit bias on behavioral perceptions and discipline decisions is critical. Indeed, research suggests that improving teachers’ cultural consciousness and understanding of bias may help to reduce disproportionate exclusionary discipline by modifying teacher’s perception of students (Davis et al., 2018; Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997; Farago et al., 2015; hooks, 1994 & 2014; Kumashiro, 2000; Legette et al., 2021; McIntosh et al., 2021a, 2021b; Shivers et al., 2021; Wink et al., 2021).

### C. CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND SUSTAINING PRACTICES

Cultural differences and diversity in child rearing approaches are also associated with children’s behavior and with adults’ perceptions of children’s behavior. For teachers, cultivation of cultural humility and understanding how to form relationships with children and families with different backgrounds is critical. An inclusive, culturally responsive-sustaining education (CRSE) is one where Black, Latine, Indigenous, and other children of color receive education that centers their cultural, racial, and linguistic identities (Gay, 2015; Paris, 2017). It builds strong connections with families, applies high expectations, and uses child-led curricula that engages them in creating a more just society (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Research shows that applying culturally responsive-sustaining practices leads to greater academic gains (Aronson & Loughter, 2016; Swain-Bradway et al., 2019). Despite these benefits, teachers are poorly prepared to implement high quality, inclusive instruction that is also culturally responsive and sustaining (Barrio, 2020) and there is limited guidance on what culturally responsive-sustaining practices look like in early childhood (Hammond, 2014). Professional preparation and development must include core content on CRSE.

### D. STRONG FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Research shows the importance of school, family, and community partnerships (Abel, 2014). However, 57% of early childhood teachers feel unprepared to work with families (Wright et al., 2000). Professional development efforts should prepare teachers to create an environment that fosters authentic, positive, and reciprocal relationships with family and community members. It is imperative that preservice and inservice teachers are confident in their ability to engage

## UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS THAT MAY BE CHALLENGING TO ADULTS

### Birth to 2 Years

- Inability to understand rules
- May cry when hungry, tired, or uncomfortable
- May pull hair, earrings, or other dangling items as they learn to grasp
- Explores and experiments without knowledge of safety
- Easily frustrated and may respond by biting, throwing, or screaming
- Asserts their newly discovered independence by refusing to comply
- Insistence on doing for themselves
- Very possessive of their things, or the perception of ownership
- Inability to wait or sit still for long periods of time
- Protests when their needs are not met

### 3- to 5-Year-Olds

- Inability to wait or sit still for long periods of time
- Tests limits and boundaries
- Lacks impulse control and the ability to resist what is prohibited
- Argues their ideas and desires
- Blames other for their behavior and may deny their role in misbehavior
- May misbehave to gain attention from an adult
- Experiments with profanity, sometimes to gain adult attention
- May be aggressive and argumentative with children and adults
- Understands the impact of hurtful words and will use them when angry
- Needs assistance to calm down and regulate their emotions

families, especially those who are racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse, those whose children have disabilities, and families that have been historically marginalized (Abel, 2014; Smith & Sheridan, 2019). Many early childhood teachers have limited knowledge of and experiences with diverse populations. Professional preparation and development should include learning opportunities that assist teachers in identifying local leaders, community resources, and cultural and linguistic assets, through asset mapping, community cafes, and community equity audits. This may help teachers acquire cultural knowledge of the children they serve, and recognize the strengths, values, and wisdom embedded in the community (Yuan, 2017).

### 3 Improve Classroom Climate

To address and prevent exclusionary discipline in early childhood, the workforce must be highly skilled and knowledgeable about classroom management and the foundational practices that promote a positive learning climate. This includes maintaining nationally recommended adult-child ratios and group sizes, implementing a curriculum that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate, and pedagogy that engages and meets the emerging needs and interests of all children, allowing children to move with agency.

#### A. RATIOS AND GROUP SIZES

Low adult-child ratios and small, manageable group sizes are critical in creating a healthy classroom environment, reducing chaos, and promoting positive relationships between adults and children. Young children simply need more individualized attention and care, for learning and safety purposes, than their older peers, making ratios and group sizes especially critical to this age group. Responsive, warm, and enriching relationships are at the foundation of healthy brain development, and require an adult to be available to respond to a child’s needs—emotional, cognitive, or physical. This work is more difficult if the adult is tasked with being responsible for 10 toddlers or 6 infants. Research shows that children of color are more likely to attend programs with higher adult-child ratios than their white peers (Schachner, et al., 2016). Research has found that lower ratios and smaller group sizes are inversely related to teacher stress. Indeed, programs with higher ratios have more incidents of suspensions and expulsions (Zinsser et al., 2019). Additionally, as the teacher-child

**FIGURE 2 HEAD START RECOMMENDED RATIOS AND GROUP SIZE**

Type of Program	Age of Children	Group Size	Adult/Child Ratio or Case Load	Reference
Center-based	Birth–3	8	1 Teacher for every 4 children	1302.21 (b) (2)
Center-based	4–5 years	17–20 children, with a maximum of 20 children enrolled in any one class.	2 paid staff people per class – teacher and teacher aide, or 2 teachers	1302.21 (b) (3)(4)
	3 years	15–17 children, with a maximum of 17 children enrolled in any one class		
	3 years	13–15 children, with a maximum of 15 children		
Home-based	0–5 years	Individual Family Home visit – One home visit per week that is at minimum 1.5 hour Provide, at minimum, 22 group solicitation activities over the course of the year	Caseload of 10-12 children with a maximum of 12	1302.22(c)
Family Child Care Homes	0–5 years	With one child care provider: Maximum group size is 6 children with no more than 2 children under the age of 2.	Child Care Provider’s own children under the age of 6 must be counted in the ratio when they are home	1302.23(b)
	Infants and toddlers	One child care provider may care for 4 infants and toddlers with no more than 2 under the age of 18 months.		

Schachner et al., 2016

ratio increases, so does the likelihood of expulsion (Gilliam, 2006). In an analysis of the National Prekindergarten Study, Gilliam (2006) found that an additional 3–4 children per teacher was associated with a 15% increased likelihood of expulsion.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has minimum recommendations for ratios and group sizes. The Head Start Program Performance Standards, which is considered the gold standard in this dimension in particular, include ratio and group size requirements for grantees (Figure 2).

These recommendations are rarely reflected in state licensing regulations. Some states have ratios as high as 1:18 of 1:20 for preschool children and 1:11 for toddlers in their licensing regulations (World Population Review, n.d.). Of course, appropriate ratios and group sizes require more workers. Workforce shortages make achieving smaller group sizes more difficult. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, four out of five child care centers are experiencing staff shortages (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2021).

It is critical that states adopt, at a minimum, NAEYC's recommendations for ratios and group sizes and move toward future alignment with Head Start's Program Performance Standards, in order to mitigate teacher stress and burnout. Beyond licensing requirements, states can use their CCDF quality funding, state funding, American Rescue Plan Act Funding, reimbursement rates, and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) to support programs in transitioning to lower ratios and group sizes.

## B. CLASSROOM DESIGN AND FLOW

To engage all children and prevent challenging behavior, children must be fully engaged in activities that meet their developmental, cultural, and linguistic needs (Hoven et al., 2016). An evidence-based curriculum should be used that is aligned with state standards and competencies. A highly qualified and skilled workforce with knowledge of how young children grow and develop, social emotional development (United States Department of Education & The United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2015), and addressing challenging behavior is critical to prevent exclusionary discipline. Early childhood educators must understand trauma and resilience and implement trauma informed and trauma healing practices using an equity lens (Holmes et al., 2015).

The design of the classroom should be aligned with the ages, interests, and cultural and linguistic needs and abilities of the children. The foundation of all teaching and learning is positive relationships between the children and adults, teachers and families, and all adults, school-wide (Howes et al., 2013). The environment should provide a balance of active and quiet activities and a myriad of materials that promote growth in all developmental areas. There should be minimal transitions or long periods where children are expected to wait and/or be still. Children should be able to move freely, actively engage, and have authentic interactions with adults and children. Children should be able to interact, discover, explore, and experiment without being overly controlled or their bodies overly policed. They should have the option of how they'd like to sit rather than being forced to sit with legs crossed and hands in laps (criss-cross applesauce), or how they'd like to walk (hands behind back) (e.g., Wadsworth et al., 2011). Children should be encouraged to 'gather' rather than being required to stand in line and should be allowed to exit an activity once they are finished rather than being made to wait for long periods of time for others to complete a project. Gross motor skills should be readily available and included in the classroom design, especially for active children who learn through best while moving.

## C. RELATIONSHIPS

Positive, trusting, and reciprocal relationships are foundational to social emotional development and learning in young children. It is important that positive relationships are developed with children, between children, with families and with colleagues (Hemmeter et al., 2006). Research shows the importance of nurturing relationships in promoting optimal development in young children (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Children develop in the context of family and community where the capacity to form healthy relationships, learn cultural norms, and expectations takes place (Fox, et al., 2009). Authentic relationships are a critical component of preserving cultural values and ensuring strong racial identity development through the use of culturally responsive practices (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Thus, setting the conditions for strong relationships by promoting workforce wellness, fair compensation, and mental health; building teacher capacity in establishing relationships with diverse children and families; and ensuring developmentally appropriate classrooms that enable children to move with agency, are critical to preventing and reducing exclusionary discipline.

# 4

## Improve Working Conditions for the ECE Workforce

The early care and education workforce does some of the most challenging and important work that exists. They are tasked with ensuring our nation's youngest children are safe, cared for, healthy, loved, and learning. Despite this, they are underpaid and undervalued, overworked, and lack the respect their work merits. In every state in the nation, the median wage for child care workers makes them eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Other research has found that large numbers of workers are eligible for public income support programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (McLean et al., 2021; Otten et al., 2019). Chronic underfunding of the system has caused conditions that make the job even harder: high group sizes and ratios, inadequate breaks and time off, no benefits, and lack of support staff who can provide added assistance in areas like mental health and behavior (Kwon et al., 2022). There is often little opportunity to advance in the profession. All of these factors contribute to stress and hardship, and an inability for these workers to care for their own families, which affect dispositions, competencies, and efficacy at work, and fundamentally affects the children they serve. A holistic approach to addressing suspensions and expulsions must include:

### A. INCREASED COMPENSATION

Livable wages, and basic work benefits, such as health insurance, family leave, and paid time off (PTO) are crucial factors associated with better physical and mental health outcomes for early childhood workers (Jeon et al., 2018; Linnan et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 2013). Therefore, it is imperative to increase wages for ECE teachers and guarantee basic work benefits, so ECE teachers can access the resources they need to support their own well-being.

### B. MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION OF THE WORKFORCE

The mental health of the early childhood workforce is foundational to the success of all early childhood programs and is essential in promoting positive and nurturing teacher-child interactions (Buettnner et al., 2016; Koles et al., 2013) and preventing early childhood suspensions and expulsions (Silver & Zinsser, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to increase access to mental health resources in the workplace, such as implementing social-emotional programs that focus on the mental health of teachers and children.

## C. WORK ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY

Providing work resources is crucial for early childhood teachers to do their jobs, but also for their well-being. For instance, the healthy physical work environment of ECE programs, such as the quality of the physical facility, clean drinking water, and the presence of adult-sized furniture, and a positive work climate, such as supportive relationships with co-workers, have been predictive of positive ECE teacher well-being outcomes and even work commitment and higher self-efficacy skills (Kwon et al., 2021 a). Regularly scheduled breaks, planning time, and additional classroom staff is critical in promoting employee well-being as well (Kwon et al., 2022). Access to substitute teachers is important for ensuring child care providers are able to take time off and prevent burnout. Providing these basic but essential resources and supports can help reduce staff turnover and improve job satisfaction.

## D. CAREER AND EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

The opportunity for career advancement is a contributing factor to the well-being of early childhood professionals. Early childhood teachers are rarely afforded access to mentors, coaching, professional development, and opportunities to grow and advance in their careers (Gibbons et al., 2016). Scholarships should be available for those seeking higher education degrees. Programs such as the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (T.E.A.C.H.) grant provides funding for early educators to access higher education, and require a commitment to remain employed with the participating facility for a specified period of time. Not only does the grant provide educational assistance, it also contributes to reducing turnover that is rampant in early childhood programs. In addition to scholarships, universities should offer flexibility in course offerings that meet the needs of those working with children during the day. This includes evening and weekend formats, online and hybrid classes. Colleges and universities should create articulation agreements so that early childhood professionals can easily progress from a community college to a four-year institution with no credit hours lost. Finally, courses should be offered in the languages providers and the children they serve speak, which should include, at a minimum, English and Spanish.

## **5** Implement Universal Developmental and Behavioral Screening

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 6 children have a developmental disability or developmental delay that affects their social, emotional, motor, and cognitive development (CDC, 2022). Only a fraction of potentially eligible children are identified early and receive the supports they need to thrive. Partnering with children’s medical homes, early care and education providers can implement periodic developmental and behavioral screening to identify concerns and ensure children and families receive the supports they need. Without identification and supports, providers may not understand the source or root cause of children’s behaviors or be equipped to build relationships and foster their learning effectively. This can result in misattributions of behavioral roots and mismatches between the child’s development and the adult’s behavioral expectations, eventually leading to harsh and exclusionary discipline. What’s more, when children are excluded from early childhood programs through suspensions and expulsions, it is highly likely that they will lose access to screenings and other services that they may need, such as mental health, early intervention, and special education (Meek & Gilliam, 2016). Ensuring screening processes are in place to identify and support children and the staff who serve them, is a critical part of preventing suspensions and expulsions.

## **6** Ensure Linkages to Additional Services, Like Early Intervention, Preschool Special Education, and Direct Mental Health Services

Developmental and behavioral screening is critical for identification, but appropriate referrals for additional services after children are identified, are a necessary next step. Children with disabilities or with mental health needs can be served successfully in inclusive early childhood programs and by general early educators, but both teachers and children may need additional supports from specialists. Children with disabilities have the right to these supports by law, and should be served in the environment they would be served in if they did not have a disability. In addition, children with disabilities

have some protections from suspensions and expulsions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education law, and cannot be excluded if the reason for exclusion is based on their disability.

Still, children of color, including Black, Latine, Asian American, and American Indian/Alaska Native children are less likely to have access to early intervention and preschool special education (Meek et al., 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2022), and they are more likely, with some exceptions, to receive services in the special education system later in life. Considering the documented benefits of supporting children as early as possible and the consequences of not doing so, it is critical for states and programs to be especially attentive to the need for appropriate referrals in efforts to prevent suspensions and expulsions. When children are removed from programs through suspensions and expulsions, referrals are not made, children are punished rather than treated, and valuable time is lost when intervention has the greatest impacts (Meek & Gilliam, 2016). Suspension and expulsion can both adversely influence the likelihood that children will be identified and supported, and be the consequence of not being identified and supported.

## **7** Ensure Access to Statewide and Program Wide Social Emotional Supports Like Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Providing equitable social emotional supports for children and families is crucial to preventing exclusionary discipline. Young children engage in behaviors adults find challenging daily. This is normal, developmentally expected behavior. It is a time of significant brain development, when communication, self regulation, and social and emotional development are just beginning to unfold. Often, early learning programs are the first setting children spend time in outside their home and care of their immediate families. These facts, paired with both large group sizes and ratios and inadequate professional preparation systems, create a climate vulnerable for exclusion. It is critical that early educators have the specialized supports they need to foster the learning and healthy development of all children.

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation



(IECMHC) is one promising model for promoting positive social-emotional development in children and preventing expulsions and suspensions. In this model, early childhood mental health specialists team up with programs to support teachers', children's, and families' mental health needs. This work includes supporting teachers in creating healthy classroom climates and building their competencies to support children's social emotional development. It also includes screening adults and children to identify if additional support services are needed, and fostering positive family-teacher relationships. This work may also include examining policies and data systems to address organization-wide climate. A recent randomized controlled trial showed that children who received IECMHC services through their ECE programs exhibited an increase in self-initiation and self-regulation skills, better attachment relationships with adults, and a decrease in aggressive behaviors and anxiety compared to children in the control group (Reyes & Gilliam, 2021). Additionally, emerging research has found benefits for Black children specifically. One study found that when consultants had positive relationships with ECE teachers there were greater gains in teacher-child interactions and attachment with Black children, especially Black boys compared to their white peers. Findings were not significant for other children (Davis et al., 2018). The researchers also found that IECMH consultants who self-reported expertise in cultural diversity were more effective in using the strength of the consultant-teacher relationship to enhance teacher-child interactions (Davis et al., 2018). Other research has found that while ECE teachers with high levels of depression were more likely to request a child to be expelled, this was less likely if ECE teachers were working in programs that offered IECMHC services Silver & Zinsser, 2020).

Holistic social-emotional programs, such as the Pyramid Model for Promoting Young Children's Social Emotional Competence (an early childhood application of Positive Behavior of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) may also be helpful in reducing exclusionary discipline since they focus on building teacher capacity to support children's social-emotional development by providing universal, targeted, and intensive supports while promoting systems and policies needed to create warm, responsive, and positive climates that foster close relationships and learning (Hemmeter et al., 2022; Hemmeter et al., 2021). Evaluations of the Pyramid Model have shown positive effects on children when teachers or educators receive ongoing coaching and support (Hemmeter et al., 2016; 2021). One study showed a dramatic decrease in early childhood expulsions as teachers improved their ability to teach prosocial skills embedded

in the Pyramid Model (Vinh, et al., 2016). In K-12 systems, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) has been shown to decrease racial discipline gaps (McIntosh et al., 2018), especially when implemented with equity-oriented practices (McIntosh et al., 2021 a, 2021 b).

## **8** Establish Culturally-Responsive and Asset-Based Partnerships with Families

Family engagement is the practice of interacting with families as partners in the care and education of young children. The foundation of all family engagement activities is the recognition that parents/caregivers are the first, best, and most consistent teacher in a child's life. Research shows children experience better outcomes when families are valued, embraced, and included as fundamental partners in their child's learning experience (Barger et al., 2019).

States should engage families in the policy development process and include them as reporters in data collection. Early childhood programs should incorporate strategies and activities that promote partnerships with families that are culturally responsive and asset-based (McWayne et al., 2022). Optimal family engagement places families as the experts on their children and values families' funds of knowledge. It also involves two way communication, positive relationships, trust, and respect. Early childhood programs should ensure alignment of the curriculum with the child's culture and school environment (Galindo & Sheldon, 2011). Early childhood professionals should engage in cultural humility and equity-oriented practices to learn the needs and desires of families. Cultural humility places early childhood personnel in the position of a learner who humbles themselves, abandons what they believe they know about families, and learns about the family holistically, from a cultural perspective. Equity-oriented practices support the well-being of families by providing family support, social and human capital resources that families want and need, so they can thrive and be the best parents possible (Sabol et al., 2018).

## 9 Develop Coordinated, Multiple Reporter Data Systems and Establish Continuous Feedback Loops

Data can be a powerful lever for civil rights. Harsh discipline became the subject of major policy movement over the last ten years, in part, due to the federal government's first ever release of preschool discipline data indicating stark disparities in suspensions and expulsions. Disaggregated data, in particular, can reveal inequities in opportunity and disparities in outcomes, which enables decision makers to understand where challenges exist and where resources are needed. Data are also necessary to guide professional development and better understand intervention effectiveness. Where there are no data, there is no visibility into practices, and this lack of visibility obscures where additional resources and attention is needed. That said, data are only useful when disaggregated, analyzed, and used to inform decision making related to resources, policy, and professional development (McIntosh et al., 2020). Collecting, analyzing, and using data on harsh discipline is a critical part of the solution to end these practices. In developing a data system, states and programs should:

- **Collect data on all forms of harsh discipline**, including suspension, soft suspension, expulsion, soft expulsion, seclusion, corporal punishment, and restraint, **across all systems** that serve young children (child care, Head Start, state and locally funded pre-K, kindergarten, elementary schools), and across **multiple types of reporters** (administrators, teachers, families, mental health consultants). Existing national data are helpful, but limited in scope and coverage, only collecting information on public pre-K–12th grade, excluding child care and Head Start, which serve millions of children. The data are also exclusively reported by administrators at the district and state level, which may result in undercounting exclusionary discipline, particularly soft expulsions and suspensions which occur with greater regularity in the early years.
- **Require all data to be reported and disaggregated by race, ethnicity, language, gender, income, and disability.** It is impossible to understand disparities without disaggregated data. Groups of children who are overrepresented in exclusionary discipline may differ based on community demographics and context. It is important to understand these trends and tailor solutions

accordingly. Ensure state and local capacity in analyzing disaggregated data and understanding disparities. Make disparity tracking common practice alongside rate tracking, to understand progress and inform resource allocation.

- **Use data to inform policy development and policy change.** Data is only an impetus for change if it is analyzed and used to inform policy and funding. Too often, data are collected, only to be left unanalyzed and unused. States and programs should institute regular reviews of data, at least quarterly, and use those review periods to examine policies that are contributing, whether positively or negatively, to exclusionary discipline. These analyses should inform what policies are expanded or rolled back, target “hot spots” of exclusionary discipline (i.e., specific situations in which exclusionary discipline is more likely), and influence budget and dollar allocation decisions. Special attention should be paid to disaggregation of the data and how policies are affecting particular groups of children, especially those who are most likely to be the subjects of unfair exclusion, including Black children and children with disabilities. Additional groups of children may be at higher risk of suspension or expulsion at the community level, depending on the population and community context.
- **Use data to inform professional development and technical assistance.** In addition to using data to inform policy decisions, states and programs should use data to make decisions about the deployment of resources for technical assistance and professional development, including coaching, infant and early childhood mental health consultation, and other approaches. They can use data to identify where high rates and stark disparities in exclusionary discipline exist, and deploy targeted supports focused on understanding bias, improving school climate, and supporting children’s and adults’ mental health and wellness.
- **Build local data capacity.** Local programs should understand why they are collecting data and have the skills to analyze and use their data to support improved outcomes and reduced disparities. As states build more robust data systems, they should concurrently deploy technical assistance to support local communities in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Programmatic data can help reveal where harsh discipline happens most often (e.g. a particular classroom, the playground, the hallways), to whom it is happening disproportionately, and who is utilizing these practices more than others. This information can help school and program leaders implement targeted change

through deep supports to particular teachers, improving environmental conditions where exclusionary discipline happens most frequently, and talking with students, families, and teachers about possible misalignment in rules between home, community, and schools (Muldrew & Miller, 2021).

## 10 Consider Context, Promote Family Wellness

Children grow up in the context of their families and communities. A holistic plan to address exclusionary discipline must include attention to family wellness and to the communities in which children live. The Head Start model is centered on this premise, and beyond early care and education, provides families with connections to whatever resources they need, such as health insurance and a medical home, GED or ESL courses, continuing education opportunities, employment support, housing vouchers, food assistance, and transportation support.

Exclusionary discipline both influences and is influenced by children's broader contexts. For example, economic, food, or housing insecurity may contribute to a child's stress and manifest in behaviors adults find challenging, particularly in young children who do not have the language skills to communicate their feelings, wants, and needs. Housing instability, for example, is associated with both physical and mental health risks (Gultekin et al., 2020) and children who have experienced homelessness may face higher risks of exclusion from school. A study of child homelessness and discipline in Michigan found that a higher percentage of these children were excluded (16% of homeless students, 11% of economically disadvantaged students, and 4% of non economically disadvantaged students). These higher rates of exclusion continued even after children were no longer unhoused and disproportionately impacted Black children (Erb-Downward & Blakeslee, 2021). Approximately 2.5 million children experience homelessness annually, more than half of them under the age of six (Bassuk, 2014; National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 2016).

Other research has found that boys in households with moderate-to-severe food insecurity were 11 times more likely to be excluded from preschool (Jackson & Testa, 2020). Approximately 127 million households with children struggled

with food insecurity and used the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) in the last year (American Community Survey, 2021). Families of color face this challenge disproportionately, with 26% of Black, 20% of Latine, and 8% of White households receiving SNAP in the last 12 months (American Community Survey, 2021).

At the same time, exclusionary discipline affects children's broader context. A child who is excluded has a direct impact on a parent's ability to work, which may impact families' ability to stay economically afloat, and secure food and shelter (Powell, 2020; Powell & Coles, 2020). This is especially challenging for families who receive child care assistance, due to the limited number of facilities that accept child care subsidies. It may take time to find alternate care, further impacting the ability of parents to maintain stable employment (O'Grady, 2021; Stegelin, 2018). Parents of children with disabilities or behavior problems are 2–3 times more likely to experience child care related employment problems (i.e., absent from work, changing schedule; Montes & Halterman, 2011).

Families experiencing poverty, who live in child care deserts, and those who have children with disabilities have limited options when choosing child care for their children. Children under five outnumber the available openings for child care (Morrissey, 2020). Families of color and those who have children with disabilities have even fewer options for accessing child care in their area, especially high-quality programs (Novoa, 2020). Suspensions and expulsions place yet another access barrier in these families' paths to providing their children with high quality learning experiences.

States and programs can address family wellness to support reductions in exclusionary discipline by:

### A. UNDERSTANDING FAMILY NEEDS

Understanding families' needs is a first step in supporting their wellness. This requires establishing authentic partnerships with families, acknowledging and repairing school-induced collective trauma, proving trustworthiness, forming open lines of communication, and being willing to engage in conversations about broader family needs. The Head Start model requires individualized family plans that support families through identifying their personal strengths, goals, and needs, and makes programs accountable for supporting families in these areas. States and programs can forge partnerships with local Head Start programs, which operate

in nearly every zip code in the United States, to better understand the processes and approaches to successfully support holistic family wellness through individualized family plans.

## **B. ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

States and programs should establish relationships and connections with adjacent systems in communities to promote family wellness cohesively and place less burden on families. The Head Start model has implemented this as a core part of the approach for several decades and could be used as a resource. Learning and education programs should, at a minimum, connect with medical homes, including federally qualified health systems; mental health systems; transportation systems; food and housing support systems; employment training systems; higher education, including community colleges; and economic support systems to ensure seamless connections and referrals for families, as needed.

## **C. CONNECTING FAMILIES WITH SUPPORT SERVICES AS NEEDED**

Many times, families are labeled as hard to reach. When we shift our thinking to considering services as hard to reach, we can better meet the needs of the families we serve. There may be barriers that prevent families from accessing services such as where the services are located, lack of knowledge about availability and eligibility of service and past negative experiences with similar services. It is important to meet families where they are. Provide information about services in areas that families frequent, including churches, little league venues, barber shops and beauty salons, and community centers. Be visible in the community. Whenever possible, partner with parents to promote activities in the community such as parents night out, field days, talent shows, etc. It is important to build mutual trust and respect with families and community members to assist in overcoming past negative experiences that may prevent families from accessing services (Cleveland, 2012).

## **D. CREATING SPACES FOR FAMILIES TO BUILD COMMUNITY**

Create healing zones within communities to “break down stereotypes, change attitudes, foster mutual empathy, and improve communities,” (Abrahams, 2017). There must be intentional efforts to create healing spaces within the community including investments in policy and funding to build a system that is sustainable and ensures equity for all children. These spaces are created beyond the school and programs and are designed to ensure “community, culture, agency, relationships, meaning making, and achievement—largely collective and community based processes,” (Kimmer, 2021 p. 2) are valued and implemented. This pattern of care and support has always been vital to the fabric of communities of color, especially in Black communities (hooks, 1990).

## **E. ALLOCATING GREATER FUNDING FOR SERVICES THAT PROMOTE FAMILY AND CHILD WELLNESS**

Families are struggling to meet basic needs. Economic, housing, and food insecurity is widespread and millions of Americans remain un- or under-insured. These challenges disproportionately affect historically marginalized communities, including communities of color, immigrant communities, and people with disabilities. Supports that help families attain economic security, like the child tax credit, family allowances, and paid family and medical leave; greater access to housing and food support through WIC, SNAP, or housing vouchers; and greater access to healthcare, can support families’ holistic wellness. This includes improving the conditions in which children live and learn, and supporting healthy child development. States, localities, and programs should work together to secure greater funding and equitable access to these supports.

# Conclusion

Expulsions and suspensions happen too frequently, they start as early as toddlerhood, and they are disproportionately applied to Black children and some other children of color, children with disabilities and boys. This happens, despite the fact that research consistently shows that these practices are ineffective - they do not help children, they do not help teachers, they do not help families. In fact, they are associated with a host of negative short and long term impacts.

Solutions to date — including policies and practices — have been piecemeal, and often, unidimensional. This long standing, complex problem warrants greater attention, and a more holistic approach that includes policy, professional preparation and development, working conditions, classroom and school conditions and climate, coordinated data systems, attention to whole family wellness, and more.

Fundamentally, expulsions and suspensions are a denial of access to early learning opportunities. Decision makers cannot continue promoting greater access to ECE services via enrollment, while continuing to inadequately address major denials of access through exclusionary discipline, particularly when such denials are consistently, starkly, disproportionately affecting Black children and other groups. Policymakers, administrators, and professional preparation and development systems must act to end these harsh, developmentally inappropriate, and unfair practices, and do so through comprehensive reforms and investments.

**Decision makers cannot continue promoting greater access to ECE services via enrollment, while continuing to inadequately address major denials of access through exclusionary discipline, particularly when such denials are consistently, starkly, disproportionately affecting Black children and other groups.**



# References

- Abel, Y. (2014). Process into products: Supporting teachers to engage parents. *Education and Urban Society*, 46(2), 181-191.
- Abrahams, S. (2017). *Why intergenerational relationships are good for you*. Retrieved from <https://www.rewire.org/intergenerational-relationships-good/>.
- Alexander, B. L., Meek, S., Janssen, J., Catherine, E. (in press). *National Equity Landscape of State Discipline Policies Across Pre-K–12 Contexts*. The Children’s Equity Project.
- Allen, R. (2021) Preschool suspensions: A civil rights issue. In D. Jackson (Ed), *Key Issues Confronting the Black Community in Denver, Colorado: A Community in Transition*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Allen R. & Gilliam, W. (In Press). Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Education. In J. Neitzel & E. Mead (Eds.), *Handbook of Equity in Early Childhood*. Brookes Publishing.
- Allen, A., Scott, L. M., & Lewis, C. W. (2013). Racial microaggressions and African American and Hispanic students in urban schools: A call for culturally affirming education. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 3(2), 117-129.
- American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health, Lamont, J. H., Devore, C. D., Allison, M., Ancona, R., Barnett, S. E., Gunther, R., Holmes, B., Minier, M., Okamoto, J. K., Wheeler, L. S. M., Young, T. (2013). Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion. *Pediatrics* 131 (3): e1000–e1007. 10.1542/peds.2012-3932
- American Community Survey (2021). *Receipt of food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by presence of children under 18 years by household type for households*. ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.
- American Community Survey (2021). *Receipt of food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by race of householder (American Indian/Alaska Native Alone)*. ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.
- American Community Survey (2021). *Receipt of food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by race of householder (Asian Alone)*. ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.
- American Community Survey (2021). *Receipt of food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by race of householder (Black or African American Alone)*. ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.
- American Community Survey (2021). *Receipt of food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by race of householder (Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Alone)*. ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.
- American Community Survey (2021). *Receipt of food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by race of householder (Other Race Alone)*. ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.
- American Community Survey (2021). *Receipt of food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by race of householder (Two or More Races)*. ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.
- American Community Survey (2021). *Receipt of food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months by race of householder (White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino)*. ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables.
- American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools?: An evidentiary review and recommendations. *The American Psychologist*, 63(9), 852-862.
- Arcia, E. (2006). Achievement and enrollment status of suspended students: Outcomes in a large, multicultural school district. *Education and Urban Society*, 38, 359–369.

Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2015). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research*, 86, 163-206. doi:10.3102/0034654315582066

Austin, L., Edwards, B. & Whitebook, M. (2019). *Racial wage gaps in early education employment*. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/brief/racial-wage-gaps-in-early-education-employment/>

Barger, M. M., Kim, E. M., Kuncel, N. R., & Pomerantz, E. M. (2019). The relation between parents' involvement in children's schooling and children's adjustment: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 145(9), 855.

Barrio, B. L. (2021). Understanding culturally responsive practices in teacher preparation: An avenue to address disproportionality in special education. *Teaching Education*, 32(4), 437-456.

Bassuk, E. L., DeCandia, C. J., Beach, C. A., Berman, F. (2014). *America's Youngest Outcasts: A Report Card on Child Homelessness*. The National Center on Family Homelessness at American Institutes for Research.

Bee, D. N. (2012). *An exploratory study of child care directors' response to young children's challenging behavior and the impact on preschool expulsion*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Florida State University.

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Boone, S.B., Newton, J.R., Diderickden, K.W., Daniels, M., and Glosson, K. (2021). Confronting racism and bias within early intervention: The responsibility of systems and individuals to influence change and advance equity. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* (41)1. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0271121421992>

Brownstein, R. (2009). Pushed out. *Learning for Justice Magazine*(36). <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2009/pushed-out>

Buettner, C. K., Jeon, L., Hur, E., & Garcia, R. E. (2016). Teachers' social-emotional capacity: Factors associated with teachers' responsiveness and professional commitment. *Early Education and Development*, 27(7), 1018-1039.

Bustamante, A.S., Dearing, E., Zachrisson, H. D. & Vandell, D. L. (2022). Adult outcomes of sustained high-quality early child care and education: Do they vary by family income? *Child Development*, 93(2) 307-611.

Butchart, R. (2010) Black hope, white power: Emancipation, reconstruction and the legacy of unequal schooling in the US South, 1861–1880, *Paedagogica Historica*, 46(1). 33-50. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00309230903528447>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2019). *Federal rental assistance fact sheets*. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/federal-rental-assistance-fact-sheets#US>

Cleveland, A. (2012) Reaching "Hard to Reach" families: Investigating research and findings in communities across the globe. <https://cofh.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Hard-to-Reach-Families-CATCH-2012.pdf>

Constitutional Rights Foundation (2007). BRIA 23 2 c Mendez v Westminster: Paving the way to school desegregation. <https://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-23-2-c-mendez-v-westminster-paving-the-way-to-school-desegregation>

Cutler, A., and L. Gilkerson. (2002). *Unmet needs project: A research, coalition building and policy initiative on the unmet needs of infants, toddlers and families*. University of Illinois at Chicago and Erikson Institute.

Davis, A.E., Shivers, E.M., & Perry, D.F. (2018). Exploring culture, race, and ethnicity in early childhood mental health consultation: The role of the consultative alliance. *Perspectives*, 3(2), 24.

Danley, L. (2022) *Over half of families are spending more than 20% of income on child care*. First Five Years Fund. <https://www.ffyf.org/over-half-of-families-are-spending-more-than-20-on-child-care/>

Derman-Sparks, L., & Phillips, C. B. (1997). *Teaching/learning anti-racism: A developmental approach*. Teachers College Press.

Devine P., Forscher P., Austin A., & Cox, W. (2012). Long-term reduction in implicit race bias: A prejudice habit-breaking intervention. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48, 1267–78.

Dunham, Y. (2011). An angry outgroup effect. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47, 668 – 671.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.01.003>.

Early Childhood Workforce Index (2020). *State policies to improve early childhood educator jobs*. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/state-policies-to-improve-early-childhood-educator-jobs/early-childhood-educator-workforce-policies/qualifications-educational-supports/>

Eberhardt, J.L. (2019). *Biased: Uncovering the hidden prejudice that shapes what we see, think, and do*. New York: Viking.

Epstein, R., Blake, J.J. & Gonzalez, T. (2019). *Girlhood Interrupted: The erasure of Black girls' childhood*.  
<https://genderjusticeandopportunity.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/girlhood-interrupted.pdf>

Erb-Downward, J. & Blakeslee, M. (May, 2021). *Recognizing Trauma: Why school discipline reform needs to consider student homelessness*. University of Michigan Poverty Solutions. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED614739.pdf>

Erickson, R. (1997). The laws of ignorance designed to keep slaves (Blacks) illiterate and powerless. *Education*, 118(2),  
[https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A20479492/OVIC?u=auraria\\_main&sid=summon&xid=619c7ea6](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A20479492/OVIC?u=auraria_main&sid=summon&xid=619c7ea6)

Fabes, R. A., Catherine, E., Quick, M., Blevins, D., & Musgrave, A. (2021). The price of punishment: Days missed due to suspension in U.S. K–12 public schools. *Psychology in the Schools*(58)10,1887-2084. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22565>

Farago, F., Sanders, K., & Gaias, L. (2015). Addressing race and racism in early childhood: Challenges and opportunities. *Discussions on Sensitive Issues*.

Fox, L., Carta, J., Strain, P., Dunlap, G., & Hemmeter, M.L. (2009). *Response to intervention and the pyramid model*. Tampa, Florida: University of South Florida, Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children;  
[www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org)

Gage, N. A., Whitford, D. K., Katsiyannis, A., Adams, S., & Jasper, A. (2019). National analysis of the disciplinary exclusion of black students with and without disabilities. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(7), 1754-1764.

Galindo, C., & Sheldon, S. B. (2011). School and home connections and children's kindergarten achievement gains: The mediating role of family involvement. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 27, 90-103.

García, J. L., Bennhoff, F. H., Leaf, D. E., & Heckman, J. J. (2021). *The dynastic benefits of early childhood education* (No. w29004). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Gay, G. (2002). Culturally responsive teaching in special education for ethnically diverse students: Setting the stage. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(6), 613-629.

Gibbons, A. Farquhar, S. & Tesar, M. (2016). *Working conditions in the early childhood education sector*.  
<https://briefingpapers.co.nz/working-conditions-in-the-early-childhood-education-sector/>

Gillespie, C. (2021). *Our youngest learners: Increasing equity in early intervention*. The Education Trust.  
<https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Increasing-Equity-in-Early-Intervention-May-2021.pdf>

Gilliam, W. S., Embry, D. D., & Howard, B. J. (June 26, 2006). *Identifying, Assessing, and Intervening with Challenging Behavior in Head Start Children*. Head Start's Eighth National Research Conference [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/mental\\_hlth\\_311.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/mental_hlth_311.pdf)

Gilliam, W.S. (2016). *Early childhood expulsions and suspensions undermine our nation's most promising agent of opportunity and social justice*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. <https://forwardpromise.org/research-resources/early-childhood-expulsions-and-suspensions-undermine-our-nations-most-promising-agent-of-opportunity-and-social-justice/>

- Gilliam, W. S., Maupin, A. N., Reyes, C. R., Accavitti, M., & Shic, F. (2016). Do early educators' implicit biases regarding sex and race relate to behavior expectations and recommendations of preschool expulsions and suspensions. *Yale University Child Study Center*, 9(28), 1-16.
- Gilliam, W. S. & Reyes, C. R. (2018). Teacher decision factors that lead to preschool expulsion: Scale development and preliminary validation of the Preschool Expulsion Risk Measure. *Infants & Young Children*, 31(2), 93-108. <http://doi.org/10.1097/IYC.000000000000113>.
- Gilliam, W. & Shahar G. (2006). Preschool and child care expulsion and suspension: Rates and predictors in one state. *Infants & Young Children*. 19. 228-245.
- Graham, L. (n.d.) *What does exclusionary discipline do and why should it only ever be used as a last resort?* The Centre for Inclusive Education. <https://research.qut.edu.au/c4ie/2020/10/15/what-does-exclusionary-discipline-do-and-why-should-it-only-ever-be-used-as-a-last-resort/>
- Greenberg, S., & Ash, J. (2012). Children with challenging behaviors: 2012 follow-up survey of Boulder County early care and education providers. *Mental Health Partners*.
- Gregory, A., Skiba, R., & Noguera, P. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher*, 39, 59–68.
- Gong Lum v. Rice, 275 U.S. 78 (1927).
- Goff, P. A., Jackson, M. C., Di Leone, B. A. L., Culotta, C. M., & DiTomasso, N. A. (2014). The essence of innocence: consequences of dehumanizing Black children. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106(4), 526.
- Gultekin, L. E., Brush, B. L., Ginier, E., Cordon, A., & Dowdell, E. B. (2020). Health risks and outcomes of homelessness in school-age children and youth: A scoping review of the literature. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 36(1), 10-18.
- Hammond, Z. (2014). *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Corwin Press.
- Hamre, B.K. & Pianta, R.C. (2004). Self-reported depression in nonfamilial caregivers: Prevalence and associations with caregiver behavior in child care settings. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 19, 297-318.
- Hemmeter, M. L., Corso, R., & Cheatham, G. (2006, February). *Issues in addressing challenging behaviors in young children: A national survey of early childhood educators*. In Conference on Research Innovations in Early Intervention, San Diego, CA.
- Hemmeter, M. L., Ostrosky, M. & Fox, L. (2006). Social and emotional foundations for early learning: A conceptual model for intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 35(4), 583-601.
- Hemmeter, M. L., Santos, R. M., & Ostrosky, M. M. (2008). Preparing early childhood educators to address young children's social-emotional development and challenging behavior: A survey of higher education programs in nine states. *Journal of Early Intervention*.
- Hinojosa, M. S., & Moras, A. (2009). Challenging colorblind education: A descriptive analysis of teacher racial attitudes. *Sociology Faculty Publications*. Paper 6. [http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/social\\_fac/6](http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/social_fac/6)
- Holmes, C., Levy, M., Smith, A., Pinne, S., & Neese, P. (2015). A model for creating a supportive trauma-informed culture for children in preschool settings. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 24(6), 1650-165
- hooks, b. (1990). Postmodern blackness. *Postmodern Culture*, 1(1).
- hooks, b. (2014). *Teaching to transgress*. Routledge.
- Hoover, S. D., Kubicek, L. F., Rosenberg, C. R., Zundel, C., & Rosenberg, S. A. (2012). Influence of behavioral concerns and early childhood expulsions on the development of early childhood mental health consultation in Colorado. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 33(3), 246-255.

- Houen, S., Danby, S., Farrell, A., & Thorpe, K. (2016). Creating spaces for children's agency: 'I wonder...' formulations in teacher-child interactions. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 48(3), 259-276.
- Howes, C., Fuligni, A. S., Hong, S. S., Huang, Y. D., & Lara-Cinisomo, S. (2013). The preschool instructional context and child-teacher relationships. *Early Education & Development*, 24(3), 273-291.
- Irwin-Vitela, L. (2010). *Child Retention in Wisconsin Child Care Settings: Understanding the Attitudes, Beliefs, and Behaviors that Impact Expulsion and Retention in Early Care and Education*. Supporting Families Together.
- Jackson, D. B., & Testa, A. (2020). Household food insecurity and preschool suspension/expulsion in the United States. *Preventive Medicine*, 141, 106283.
- Jeon, L., Buettner, C. K., & Grant, A. A. (2018). Early childhood teachers' psychological well-being: Exploring potential predictors of depression, stress, and emotional exhaustion. *Early Education and Development*, 29(1), 53-69.
- Kalinowski, M. & Kalinowski, F. (2011) *Children with challenging behaviors: Survey results from administrators and teachers in licensed early childhood programs in New Hampshire*. <http://ptan.seresc.net/blog/wpcontent/uploads/2010/03/KalinowskiFinalReport.pdf>
- Keat, J. B. (2008). Decreasing child defiance: Is inquiry indispensable? *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36(2), 155-160.
- Koles, B., O'Connor, E. E., & Collins, B. A. (2013). Associations between child and teacher characteristics and quality of teacher-child relationships: the case of Hungary. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 21(1), 53-76.
- Kozleski, E. B. (2011). Dialectical practices in education: Creating third spaces in the education of teachers. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 34, 250-259.
- Kumashiro, K. K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 25-53.
- Kwon, K. A., Ford, T. G., Jeon, L., Malek-Lasater, A., Ellis, N., Randall, K., ... & Salvatore, A. L. (2021 a). Testing a holistic conceptual framework for early childhood teacher well-being. *Journal of School Psychology*, 86, 178-197.
- Kwon, K. A., Ford, T. G., Salvatore, A. L., Randall, K., Jeon, L., Malek-Lasater, A., ... & Han, M. (2022). Neglected elements of a high-quality early childhood workforce: Whole teacher well-being and working conditions. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 1-12.
- Kwon, K.-A., Horm, D. M., & Amirault, C. (2021 b). Early childhood teachers' well-being: What we know and why we should care. *Zero to Three Journal*, 41(3), 35-44.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.
- LaForett, D. R., & De Marco, A. (2020). A logic model for educator-level intervention research to reduce racial disparities in student suspension and expulsion. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 26(3), 295.
- Legette, K. B., Halberstadt, A. G., & Majors, A. T. (2021). Teachers' understanding of racial inequity predicts their perceptions of students' behaviors. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 67, 102014.
- Linnan, L., Arandia, G., Bateman, L. A., Vaughn, A., Smith, N., & Ward, D. (2017). The health and working conditions of women employed in childcare. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(3), 283.
- Loomis, A., Davis, A., Cruden, G., Padilla, C. & Drazen, Y. (2022). Early childhood suspension and expulsion: A content analysis of state legislation. *Early Childhood Education Journal* (50),327-344. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01159-4>
- Malik, R. (Nov 6, 2017). *New Data Reveal 250 Preschoolers are Suspended or Expelled Every Day*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/new-data-reveal-250-preschoolers-suspended-expelled-every-day/>



- Martin, K.A., Bosk, E., Bailey, D. (2018). Teachers' Perceptions of Childcare and Preschool Expulsion. *Children & Society* 32(2): 87-97
- McIntosh, K., Girvan, E. J., Fairbanks Falcon, S., McDaniel, S. C., Smolkowski, K., Bastable, E., Santiago-Rosario, M. R., Izzard, S., Austin, S. C., Nese, R. N. T., & Baldy, T. S. (2021). An equity-focused PBIS approach reduces racial inequities in school discipline: A randomized controlled trial. *School Psychology*, 36(6), 433-444. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000466>
- McIntosh, K., Girvan, E. J., McDaniel, S. C., Santiago-Rosario, M. R., St. Joseph, S. D., Fairbanks Falcon, S., Izzard, S., & Bastable, E. (2021). Effects of an equity-focused PBIS approach to school improvement on exclusionary discipline and school climate. *Preventing School Failure*, 65(4), 354-361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2021.1937027>
- McIntosh, K., Smolkowski, K., Gion, C., Witherspoon, L., Bastable, E., & Girvan, E. J. (2020). Awareness is not enough: A double-blind randomized controlled trial of the effects of providing discipline disproportionality data reports to school administrators. *Educational Researcher*, 49(7), 533–537. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20939937>
- McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., Whitebook, M., & Olson, K.L. (2021). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2020*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/report-pdf/>
- McWayne, C., Hyun, S., Diez, V., & Mistry, J. (2022). "We feel connected... and like we belong": A parent-led, staff-supported model of family engagement in early childhood. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 50(3), 445-457.
- Meek, S. (2014). *Equity and excellence in the earliest years: Action on expulsion and suspension in early childhood settings*. <https://psychologybenefits.org/2014/12/16/expulsion-suspension-early-childhood-settings/>
- Meek, S.E., and W.S. Gilliam (2016). *Expulsion and Suspension as Matters of Social Justice and Health Equity*. Discussion Paper, National Academy of Medicine, Washington, DC. <https://nam.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Expulsion-and-Suspension-in-EarlyEducation-as-Matters-of-Social-Justice-and-HealthEquity.pdf>
- Meek S., Smith L., Allen R., Catherine E., Edyburn K., Williams C., ...Pontier R. (2020). *Start with equity: From the early years to the early grades*. Children's Equity Project and Bipartisan Policy Center. <https://childandfamilysuccess.asu.edu/sites/default/files/2020-07/CEP-report-071520-FINAL.pdf>
- Mendez v. Westminster Sch. Dist., (§) 64 F. Supp. 544, 549 (S.D. Cal. 1946).
- Montes, G., & Halterman, J. S. (2011). The impact of child care problems on employment: Findings from a national survey of US parents. *Academic Pediatrics*, 11(1), 80-87.
- Morris, M. W. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in schools*. The New Press.
- Morrissey, T. (2020). *Addressing the need for affordable, high-quality early childhood care and education for all in the United States*. <https://equitablegrowth.org/addressing-the-need-for-affordable-high-quality-early-childhood-care-and-education-for-all-in-the-united-states/>
- Muldrew, A. C., & Miller, F. G. (2021). Examining the effects of the personal matrix activity with diverse students. *Psychology in the Schools*, 58(3), 515-533. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22461>
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (September, 2016). *Fact Sheet: Young Children Experiencing Homelessness September 2016*. [https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.148/0va.b42.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ECE\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_2016\\_September19-v2018.pdf](https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.148/0va.b42.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ECE_Fact_Sheet_2016_September19-v2018.pdf)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (2021). *Survey: Four in five child care centers in the U.S. are understaffed*. <https://www.naeyc.org/about-us/news/press-releases/survey-childcare-centers-understaffed>
- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI). (n.d.). *Pyramid model overview*. <https://challengingbehavior.org/pyramid-model/overview/basics/>

- North Dakota State Data Center (2008). *Licensed Child Care Dismissal Study*. Retrieved from [http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/sdc/publications/reports/LicensedChildCareDismissalStudy\\_FinalResults.pdf](http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/sdc/publications/reports/LicensedChildCareDismissalStudy_FinalResults.pdf)
- Novoa, C. (2020). *The child care crisis disproportionately affects children with disabilities*. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/child-care-crisis-disproportionately-affects-children-disabilities/>
- Novoa, C., & Malik, R. (2018). *Suspensions are not support: The disciplining of preschoolers with disabilities*. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/01/17/445041/%0Asuspensions-not-support/>
- O'Grady, C.E., Jackle, E.M., & Ostrosky, M.M. (2021) Stopping suspension in early childhood: Suggestions and strategies. *Young Exceptional Children*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10962506211068069>
- Okonofua, J. A., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2015). Two strikes: Race and the disciplining of young students. *Psychological Science*, 26(5), 617-624.
- Okonofua, J. A., Paunesku, D., & Walton, G. M. (2016). Brief intervention to encourage empathic discipline cuts suspension rates in half among adolescents. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 113(19), 5221-5226.
- Okonofua, J. A., Goyer, J. P., Lindsay, C. A., Haugabrook, J., & Walton, G. M. (2022). A scalable empathic-mindset intervention reduces group disparities in school suspensions. *Science Advances*, 8(12), eabj0691. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1126/sciadv.abj0691>
- Onyeka-Crawford, A., Patrick, K., & Chaudhry, N. (2017). *Stopping school pushout of girls for color*. National Women's Law Center. [https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/final\\_nwlc\\_GirlsofColor.pdf](https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/final_nwlc_GirlsofColor.pdf)
- Otten, J. J., Bradford, V. A., Stover, B., Hill, H. D., Osborne, C., Getts, K., & Seixas, N. (2019). The culture of health in early care and education: workers' wages, health, and job characteristics. *Health Affairs*, 38(5), 709-720.
- Paris, D., & Alim, S. (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogy: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press.
- Perry, D. F., Allen, M. D., Brennan, E. M., & Bradley, J. R. (2010). The evidence base for mental health consultation in early childhood settings: A research synthesis addressing children's behavioral outcomes. *Early Education and Development*, 21(6), 795-824.
- Powell, T. (2020) *The scars of school suspension: Narratives as testimonies of collective trauma*. [Doctoral dissertation]. University of California Los Angeles. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/05p4b41r>
- Powell, T., Coles, J.A. (2020). 'We still here': Black mothers' personal narratives of sense making and resisting antiblackness and the suspensions of their Black children, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 24(1),76-95.
- Quesenberry, A. C., Hemmeter, M. L., Ostrosky, M. M., & Hamann, K. (2014). Child Care Teachers' Perspectives on Including Children With Challenging Behavior in Child Care Settings. *Infants & Young Children*, 27(3), 241-258.
- Reyes, C. R., & Gilliam, W. S. (2021). Addressing challenging behaviors in challenging environments: Findings from Ohio's early childhood mental health consultation system. *Development and Psychopathology*, 33(2), 634-646.
- Rosenbaum, J. (2018). Educational and criminal justice outcomes 12 years after school suspension. *Youth and Society* (52)4. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X17752208>
- Sabol, T. J., Sommer, T. E., Sanchez, A., & Busby, A. K. (2018). A new approach to defining and measuring family engagement in early childhood education programs. *AERA Open*, 4(3), 2332858418785904.
- Schachner, A., Belodoff, K., Chen, W-B., Kutaka, T., Fikes, A., Ensign, K., Chow, K., Nguyen, J., & Hardy, J. (2016). *Preventing suspensions and expulsions in early childhood settings: An administrator's guide to supporting all children's success*. SRI International: Menlo Park, CA. Accessed from <http://preventexpulsion.org>

- Schonert-Reichl, K. A. (2017). Social and emotional learning and teachers. *The Future of Children*, 137-155.
- Scott, T. M., Gage, N., Hirn, R., & Han, H. (2019). Teacher and student race as a predictor for negative feedback during instruction. *School Psychology*, 34, 22-31. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000251>
- Shankar, P., Chung, R., & Frank, D. A. (2017). Association of food insecurity with children's behavioral, emotional, and academic outcomes: a systematic review. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*, 38(2), 135-150.
- Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (Eds.). (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Silver, H. C., & Zinsser, K. M. (2020). The interplay among early childhood teachers' social and emotional well-being, mental health consultation, and preschool expulsion. *Early Education and Development*, 31(7), 1133-1150.
- Skiba, R. J., Michael, R. S., Nardo, A. C., & Peterson, R. L. (2002). The color of discipline: Sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. *The Urban Review*, 34(4), 317-342.
- Smolkowski, K., Girvan, E. J., McIntosh, K., Nese, R. N. T., & Horner, R. H. (2016). Vulnerable decision points for disproportionate office discipline referrals: comparisons of discipline for African American and White elementary school students. *Behavioral Disorders*, 41(4), 178–195.
- Snyder, P. A., Hemmeter, M. L., & Fox, L. (2015). Supporting implementation of evidence-based practices through practice-based coaching. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 35(3), 133-143.
- Stegelin (2018). *Preschool suspension and expulsion: Defining the issues*. Institute for Child Success. <https://www.instituteforchildsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ICS-2018-PreschoolSuspensionBrief-WEB.pdf>
- Sugai, G., & Horner, R. (2006). A promising approach for expanding and sustaining school wide positive behavior support. *School Psychology Review*, 35, 246– 259.
- Sughrue, J. A. (2003). Zero tolerance for children: Two wrongs do not make a right. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(2), 238-258.
- Sutton, R. E., & Wheatley, K. F. (2003). Teachers' Emotions and Teaching: A review of the literature and directions for future research. *Educational Psychology Review*, 15(4), 327–358. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026131715856>
- Shivers, EM, Faragó, F., & Gal-Szabo, DE (2021). The role of infant and early childhood mental health consultation in reducing racial and gender relational and discipline disparities between Black and white preschoolers. *Psychology in the Schools* 59(10). <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22573>
- Smith, T. E., & Sheridan, S. M. (2019). The effects of teacher training on teachers' family-engagement practices, attitudes, and knowledge: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 29(2), 128-157.
- Swain-Bradway, J., Gulbrandson, K., Galston, A., & McIntosh, K. (2019). *Do Wisconsin schools implementing an integrated academic and behavior support framework improve equity in academic and school discipline outcomes?* Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).
- Tape v. Hurley, 66 Cal. 473, 6 P. 129 (Cal. 1885)
- Task Force on Children Out of School (1969). *The way we go to school: The exclusion of children in Boston*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED046140.pdf>
- The Education Trust (2019). *Young learners, missed opportunities*. <https://edtrust.org/early-childhood-tool/>
- United States Civil Rights Data Collection (2021) *Discipline practices in preschool*. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-DOE-Discipline-Practices-in-Preschool-part1.pdf>

- United States Department of Education & The United States Department of Health and Human Services (2015). *Policy statement on expulsion and suspension policies in early childhood settings*. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf>
- Weiland, C., & Yoshikawa, H. (2013). Impacts of a prekindergarten program on children's mathematics, language, literacy, executive function, and emotional skills. *Child Development*, 84(6), 2112-2130.
- Yuan, H. (2017). Preparing teachers for diversity: A literature review and implications from community-based teacher education. *Higher Education Studies*, 8(1), 9-17.
- Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M. R., Espinosa, L. M., Gormley, W. T., ... & Zaslow, M. J. (2013). *Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education*. Society for Research in Child Development.
- Wadsworth, D. D., Robinson, L. E., Beckham, K., & Webster, K. (2012). Break for physical activity: Incorporating classroom-based physical activity breaks into preschools. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 39(6), 391-395.
- Wagner, B. D., & French, L. (2010). Motivation, work satisfaction, and teacher change among early childhood teachers. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 24, 152–171.
- Wink, M. N., LaRusso, M. D., & Smith, R. L. (2021). Teacher empathy and students with problem behaviors: Examining teachers' perceptions, responses, relationships, and burnout. *Psychology in the Schools*, 58(8).
- Whitaker, R.C., Dearth-Wesleya, T. & Gooze. (2015). Workplace stress and the quality of teacher–children relationships in Head Start. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 30, 57-69,
- World Population Review (n.d.) *Child Care Ratio by State 2022*. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/child-care-ratio-by-state>
- Wright, K., Daniel, T. and Himelreich, K. S. (2000). *Preparation for building partnerships with families: A survey of teachers, teacher educators, and school administrators*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.
- Wymer, S. C., Corbin, C. M., & Williford, A. P. (2022). The relation between teacher and child race, teacher perceptions of disruptive behavior, and exclusionary discipline in preschool. *Journal of School Psychology*, 90, 33-42.
- Vinh, M., Strain, P., Davidon, S., & Smith, B.J. (2016). One state's systems change efforts to reduce child care expulsion: Taking the Pyramid Model to scale. *Topics in Early Childhood Education* 36(3) 159–164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121415626130>
- Zeng, S., Pereira, B., Larson, A., Corr, C. P., O'Grady, C., & Stone-MacDonald, A. (2021). Preschool suspension and expulsion for young children with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 87(2), 199-216.
- Zimmermann, C. R. (2018). The penalty of being a young black girl: Kindergarten teachers' perceptions of children's problem behaviors and student–teacher conflict by the intersection of Race and Gender. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 87(2), 154-168.
- Zinsser, K.M., Silver, H.C., Hussaini, Q., & Zulauf, C.A. (2019). *Evaluation Report of the Implementation of Illinois Public Act 100-0105: Early childhood programs' knowledge of and responses to the 2018 expulsion legislation*. The University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.
- Zinsser, K. M., Zulauf, C. A., Das, V. N., & Silver, H. C. (2019). Utilizing social-emotional learning supports to address teacher stress and preschool expulsion. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 61, 33-42.
- Zinsser, K. M., Silver, H. C., Shenberger, E. R., & Jackson, V. (2022). A Systematic Review of Early Childhood Exclusionary Discipline. *Review of Educational Research*, 00346543211070047.