

Preschoolers Left Behind: Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood

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Promotion and
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Prevention

PD Consortium
Washington, DC
August 3, 2010

Learning Objectives

- Participants will become familiar with Walter Gilliam's startling study in 2005 on preschool suspensions and expulsions.
- Participants will be able to identify early childhood strategies that have been successfully implemented by SS/HS grantees to reduce preschool suspension and expulsion.

Summary of Walter Gilliam's study

- Looked at 52 state funded pre-k programs operating in 40 states (10 states have no state funded pre-k)
- 6.67 preschoolers were expelled per 1,000 enrolled
- Expulsion rate is 3.2 times higher than K-12 rate
- Rates highest for older preschoolers
- Rates highest for African-American preschoolers
- Boys were over 4.5 times more likely to be expelled than girls
- Expulsion rates were lowest in public school and Head Start and highest in faith-based and for-profit programs
- Expulsion rates decreased significantly with access to classroom-based mental health consultation

Summary of Walter Gilliam's study

Top Ten State Funded Pre K Programs to Expel Preschoolers

1. New Mexico **24.31** preschoolers per 1,000 in one program and **15.75** per 1,000 in a 2nd state funded prek
2. Maine **18.39** preschoolers per 1,000 enrolled
3. Alabama **14.12** preschoolers per 1,000 enrolled
4. Delaware **13.04** preschoolers per 1,000 enrolled
5. North Carolina **13.04** preschoolers per 1,000 enrolled
6. New York **12.67** preschoolers per 1,000 enrolled
7. Tennessee **12.54** preschoolers per 1,000 enrolled
8. Connecticut **12.48** preschoolers per 1,000 enrolled
9. Missouri **12.02** preschoolers per 1,000 enrolled
10. Massachusetts **11.38** preschoolers per 1,000 enrolled



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Rural community in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in Northern California.

Population 90,000 countywide.

Piloted *Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative* (ECMHI) in 2003.

Currently funding ECMHI with SS/HS dollars.



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Element 5 Activities/Interventions

- Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative (ECMHI)
- Pre-School *Second Step*
 - *Teaches empathy, impulse control, problem-solving and anger management.*
- *Second Step* Parent Training
- First Five Commission Executive Director member of Nevada County SSHS CMT.
- Three Family Resource Centers (FRCs).
- Triple P Parenting (Positive Parenting Program).



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Family Resource Centers

- Located on three elementary school campuses.
- Co-located social services for families.
- Behavioral Health Therapist works on-site.
- Parenting Classes.
- Comfortable, supportive gathering space for parents.
- Staffed by Community School Liaisons.
- Reflect the culture of the local community.
- Create linkage between 0-5 year olds and local elementary school.



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ECMHI Guiding Principles:

- Is consumer-driven; childcare providers and families are free to access or decline services.
- Promotes children's mental health by conducting prevention activities, and providing early intervention when needed.
- Facilitates access to broader community services.
- Utilizes cultural competence in all levels of service delivery.



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ECMHI Goals:

- To reduce children's challenging behaviors.
- To increase caregiver's capacity to address challenging behaviors.
- Promote and preserve children's emotional well being and preserve child's positive sense of self.
- Support adults to enjoy the children they care for.
- Increase knowledge and skills of child care providers in areas of child development, screening, assessment, and mental health.
- Enhance child/child, and child/adult relationships.



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ECMHI Project Staff:

- 1) Child Development Specialist (CDS)
- 2) Mental Health Therapist

Services provided:

- Observation and assessment of children in childcare setting.
- Consultation to childcare providers after observation.
- Training for providers on identifying and responding to behavioral health issues.
- Provide referrals to support services as needed.
- Provide mental health treatment for children and families (with prior consent).

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ECMHI Process for Service Delivery

- Child Development Specialist (CDS) contacted by childcare providers.
- CDS visits childcare setting to observe child.
- CDS makes recommendations to enhance childcare environment to better support child.
- CDS contacts Mental Health Therapist or FRC if child is in need of more intensive support.
- Therapist observes child in childcare setting. Seeks parental consent if treatment is needed.
- Therapist provides appropriate family, group, or individual therapy, including PCIT, as needed.



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Examples of techniques used by CDS to resolve issues on site:

- Modeling Behavior/Coaching
- Revision of daily schedule to support routines and ease transitions
- Behavior Management Techniques
- Staff Training on Developmental Norms
- Immediate feedback
- Rearranging physical space of childcare
- Effective Communication Strategies (with parents and children)



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Examples of ECMHI trainings offered to childcare providers:

- Behavior Management Strategies: Time Out Alternatives.
- Helping Preschoolers Cope With Stress.
- Early Mental Health Prevention and Intervention.
- Effects of Media on Child Development.
- Description of Medicines Used for Children's Mental Health Treatment.
- Developmentally Appropriate (but challenging) Behavior vs. Red Flags for Mental Health Support.



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Challenges:

- Local Baseline Data hard to find.
- Pre-schools often do not use the word “expulsion”.
- Limited # of Early Childhood Mental Health Therapists.



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Sustainability

- Increased capacity of child care providers to assess and address children's mental health needs.
- Increased capacity of parents/caregivers to support healthy child development.
- Enhanced linkage between childcare providers and Mental Health providers.
- Medi-Cal funding.
- Use evaluation outcomes to seek additional funding.



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Questions ?

Additional Resources

- Michigan's *Reducing Expulsion of Children in Child Care*
www.michigan.gov/CCEP
- *Implementing Policies to Reduce the Likelihood of Preschool Expulsion, 2008* http://www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/ExpulsionBriefImplementingPolicies.pdf
- *Reducing the Risk for Preschool Expulsion: Mental Health Consultation for Young Children with Challenging Behaviors, 2007*
<http://www.utaccs.org/pdf/Reducing%20the%20risk%20for%20preschool%20expulsion%20ecmhc%20perry%202007.pdf>
- *Creating a Workforce in Early Childhood Mental Health: Defining the Competent Specialist, 2008*
<http://academic.research.microsoft.com/Paper/4841386.aspx>

Additional Resources (cont.)

- Cherokee Nation, *How to Reduce Expulsion from Preschool, 2008*
<http://ccrc.cherokee.org/Portals/7/Docs/MAY08.pdf>
- First Five, Fresno County, CA
<http://www.kvpt.org/0to5/shows/517/PPE.php>
- Teaching Young Children, NAEYC *Preventing Preschool Expulsion*
http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/naeyc/tyc_vol1issue3/index.php?startid=20
- Young Children, NAEYC *Opportunity Knocks: A Connecticut School-Community Partnership Closes the Door on Preschool Expulsion*
<http://journal.naeyc.org/Subscription/0307/Opportunity%20Knocks-Fahey.pdf>

Early Childhood Evidence-based Practices

- SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)
<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>
- Al's Pals
www.wingspanworks.com/educationalprograms
- Caring School Communities www.devstu.org/csc
- Families and Schools Together (FAST)
www.familiesandschools.org
- Nurse Family Partnership
www.nursefamilypartnership.org

Early Childhood Evidence-based Practices (cont)

- Positive Action www.positiveaction.net
- PATHS Preschool <http://www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs>
- Second Step www.cfchildren.org
- Strengthening Families Program
<http://strengtheningfamiliesprogram.org/>



For More Information

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