



Our Students. Their Moment.

# **Expulsion and Suspension of Children from Early Childhood and Special Education Programs**

**May 2015**

**New York State Board of Regents**

**Committee on P-12 Education**

# The Benefits of Prekindergarten

- The beginning years of a child's life are critical for building an early foundation for learning, health, and wellness—all of which are needed for success in school and later in life.
- Children who participate in high-quality early education programs are far more likely to read at grade level and graduate from high school.
- Quality full-day prekindergarten programs produce significant increases in student performance in math and reading by the second grade as well as decrease rates of grade retention.
- Investing in high-quality prekindergarten programs has a positive long-term impact on children's life outcomes, narrows the achievement gap between poor and affluent youth, and provides benefits to children and taxpayers that outweigh their cost.
- Early, high-quality exposure to multiple languages results in enhanced child language outcomes across each of the languages.

# Early Childhood Settings

For the purpose of this presentation, early childhood settings is considered any program that provides early care and education to young children ages three - five, including public and private preschool and prekindergarten, Head Start, public and private faith-based preschool programs, and preschool special education programs.

# Federal Policy Statement

**In December 2014, the US Departments of Health and Human Services and Education released a policy statement on expulsion and suspension policies in early childhood settings.**

**With the aim of preventing, severely limiting, and ultimately eliminating the expulsion and suspension of young children, the Policy Statement:**

- Raised awareness of problematic issues;**
- Provided recommendations to States and programs;  
and**
- Identified resources to support this effort.**

# 2005 National Study on Suspensions and Expulsions in Pre-K

## Nationally:

- Over 10% of preschool teachers reported expelling at least 1 preschooler in the past year.
- The prekindergarten expulsion rate was 3 times the rate for K-12 students.
- Almost 20% of preschool teachers reported expelling more than one preschooler each year.

## New York State:

- Targeted Prekindergarten Program had the 7<sup>th</sup> highest expulsion rate.
- Universal Prekindergarten had the 18<sup>th</sup> highest rate.

*Walter S. Gilliam, Yale University Child Study Center, May 2005*

# 2014 Update

**U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights began collecting suspension data on preschool children and found:**

- **Black students represent 18% of preschool enrollment, but 42% of preschool students suspended once, and 48% of students suspended more than once.**
- **While boys represent 54% of the preschool population, they represent 79% of preschool children suspended once and 82% of preschool children suspended multiple times.**

*U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights; Civil Rights Data Collection; Data Snapshot: School Discipline (March 2014)*

# Implications of Expulsion and Suspension

- **10 times more likely to drop out of high school**
- **Linked to involvement in the juvenile justice system**  
*Council on School Health, American Academy of Pediatrics, March 2013*
- **May interfere with identifying underlying issues**
- **Potential for violating federal laws if administered in a discriminatory way**

David T. Burkam and Valarie Lee, "Inequality at the Starting Gate" (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2002)

# Data to Inform Next Steps

## Promising Practices:

- **Early Childhood mental health consultations for teaching professionals**
- **Workforce training and professional development**
- **Setting statewide goals based on data consultation**
- **Incorporate social emotional and behavioral health and development standards into Prekindergarten Teaching Certifications and/or on-going professional development**
- **Early childhood behavioral health specialists available for program consultations**

# Recommendations

- 1. Establish statewide policies to reduce and ultimately eliminate expulsions and suspensions of preschool students**
- 2. Develop statewide guidance and disseminate it to each preschool program in NYS**
- 3. Build capacity to collect data to inform statewide guidance and identify trends**
- 4. Provide regional professional development to preschool providers on positive and multi tiered levels of behavioral support**

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**THANK YOU!**