



Our Students. Their Moment.

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

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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 7th highest expulsion rate.
- Universal Prekindergarten had the 18th 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!