

# Overview of Reducing and Preventing Expulsion from Early Learning State Policy Slides

Carey McCann, BUILD Initiative

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# Definitions

# We don't call it expulsion...

- Please pick your child up early today
- Don't bring her in tomorrow
- Why don't you have him join us for half days for the next few weeks
- Our program just isn't right
- We can't provide the services your child needs

## Exclusionary Practices

- Remove from activities that include other children
- Remove in the short-term or limit the time a child attends the program
- Dismiss a child permanently
- Encourage families to voluntarily terminate services, “soft expulsion”

## Caring for Our Children

- Terminating enrollment because of challenging behavior or health condition
- Reductions in the amount of time in attendance at the setting
- Other services are limited on the basis of challenging behaviors, e.g. denying outdoor time, withholding food, and using food as a reward or punishment

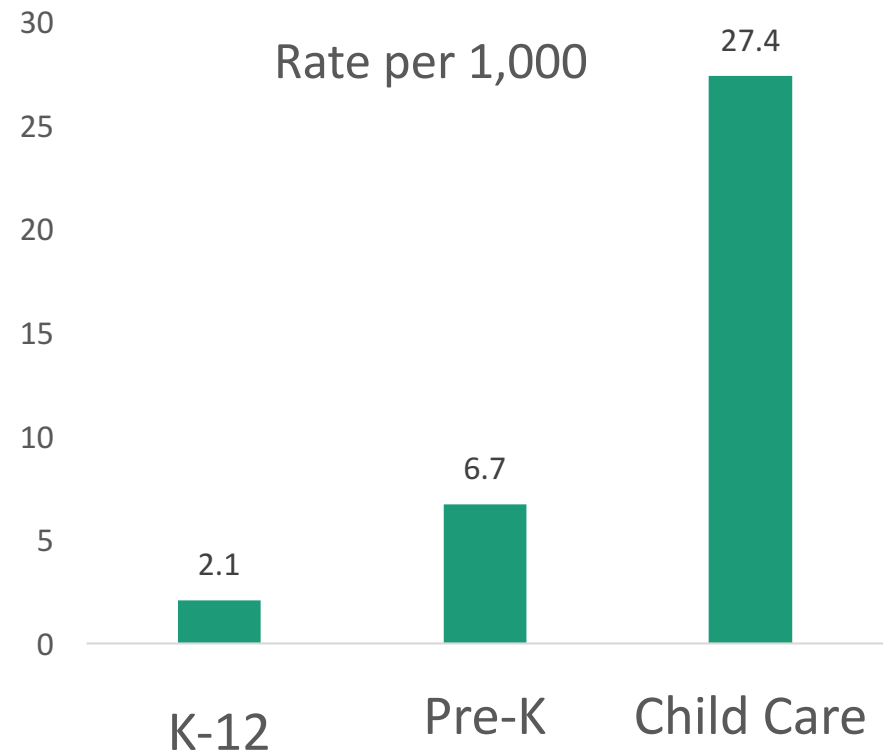
Research tells us...

# Why Focus on Expulsion and Suspension?

- Suspension and expulsion are stressful and negative experiences that can impact child outcomes
- Expulsion or suspension early in a child's education predicts later expulsion or suspension in school
- Young students who are expelled or suspended are as much as **10 times** more likely to:
  - Drop out of high school
  - Fail a grade
  - Be incarcerated



# How Often?

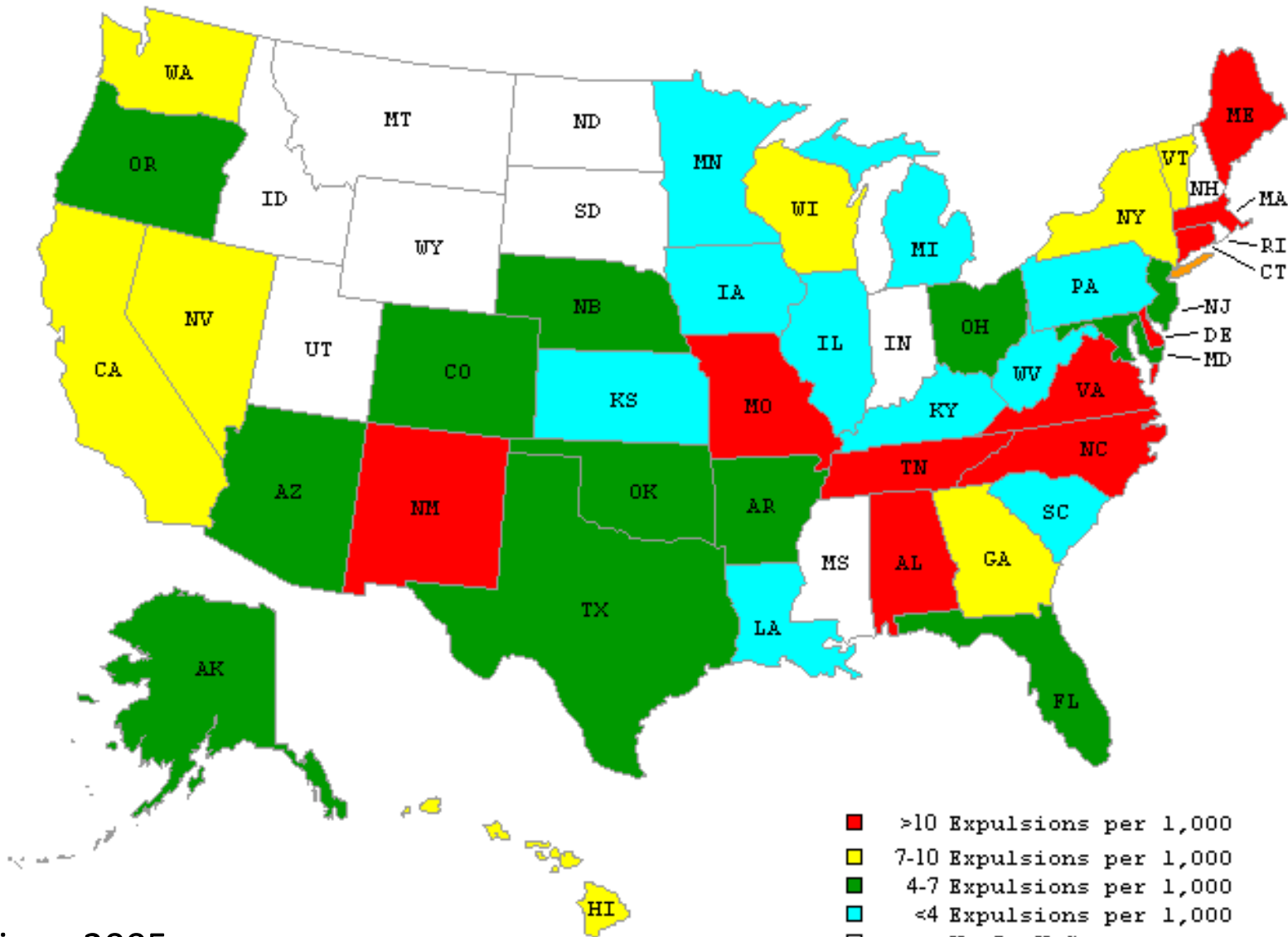


**10.4% of Pre-K teachers expelled 1 or more in past year**

Gilliam, WS & Shahar, G (2006). Preschool and child care expulsion and suspension: Rates and predictors in one state. *Infants and Young Children*, 19, 228-245.

Gilliam, WS (2005). Prekindergarteners left behind: Expulsion Rates in state prekindergarten programs. *FCD Policy Brief, Series No. 3*. Available: [www.ziglercenter.yale.edu/publications/briefs.html](http://www.ziglercenter.yale.edu/publications/briefs.html)

# State Pre-K Expulsion Rates, 2005



Gilliam, 2005





## **STRIKE #1: Older Boys**

**Boys** 3½ times more likely than girls

**4-year-olds** 50% more likely than 3's





## Strike #2: Black Children

- Expelled at 2x the rate of White children; 5x the rate of Asian children
- Make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of preschool children suspended more than once

Source: CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION  
Data Snapshot: Early Childhood Education – March 2014



## **STRIKE #3: Setting**

- Private and faith-based child care
- High teacher-child ratios
- High teacher stress / Feeling hopeless
- Long school day
- Too little or too restrictive structure
- No consistent ongoing availability of a mental health consultant



## Infant Toddler

A study in Chicago found that **42% of birth to three child care programs** expelled at least one child in the previous year because of behavior

A study of Philadelphia found that **26% of child care programs** had expelled at least one child in the past year and that **toddlers were just as likely as preschoolers** to be asked to leave the child care setting



# Three Dimensions of Expulsion to Consider

# 1. Lack of Knowledge of Child Development

- Social-emotional development occurs in context of family, community and cultural expectations
- Challenging behavior is a part of typical child development and offers “touch points”
- Cross-cultural differences in children’s expression and interpretation of emotions, e.g. anger, shame, exuberance of positive emotions
- Expulsion and suspension can pathologize child behavior and increase disparities



# 1. Lack of Knowledge (continued)

- Workforce needs knowledge and skills to
  - Understand how children's emotional responses may reflect cultural expectations and learning
  - Communicate classroom expectations in a child's first language
  - Support social-emotional learning
  - Examine their own cultural socialization and practices
  - Distinguish concerning behaviors from developmentally appropriate behaviors
- NSECE study found only 20% of providers reported receiving training on facilitating social-emotional growth in the past year

## 2. Implicit Bias

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

**Below the Surface:**  
**Unconscious/Reflex**  
automatic, fast, intuitively-  
driven, emotional  
stereotypic, large resources





# Bias

- A human condition
- Unaware
- Triggered by brain making quick judgements and assessments of people and situations, influence by our back ground, cultural environment and personal experiences
- Compounded by the belief that our perceptions, beliefs and experiences are objectively true
- Negative information more salient
- Easily triggered under cognitive or emotional load

# Implicit Bias & Racial Disparities in Expulsion Rates

Growing evidence indicates...

- Black boys are perceived as less innocent, less human and more deserving of punishment
- Threat commonly associated with Black men may be generalized to Black boys as young as 5
- Underprepared early learning teachers are more likely to use punitive and rejecting disciplinary techniques



# Understanding Racial Disparities in Expulsion Rates

Recent Research has found...

- Disproportionate levels of discipline by race
- Mixed impact when background information on familial stressors is made available
- At kindergarten entry, Black and White parents equally rated their children's persistence, approaches to learning, and social interactions, but teachers rated Black students as having a distinct disadvantage relative to White students

# Countering Implicit Bias

- Institute organization-wide bias-countering processes and practice to support individuals placing cognitive effort over intuition, e.g.
  - Explicit procedures when a challenging behavior happens, e.g. clear discipline practices
  - Engage in IECMH consultation
  - Provide reflective supervision

# 3. Trauma Behavior Connection



- Approximately 10 to 14 percent of children from birth to age 5 experience emotional, relational, or behavioral disturbance
- Children experiencing trauma arrive at school less ready to learn
- Exposure to violence can diminish concentration, memory, organizational, and language abilities
- Quality of early learning settings is *even more* important

# Role of State Policy

# What is policy?

**At its most simple form...**



**In a developmental frame...**

- Implies a vision/goal
- Builds on strengths
- Has periods of regression
- Creates resiliency through cross-system and public-private ownership
- Cycle of design, implementation, and maintenance/re-design

# POSSIBLE COMPONENTS OF A STATE STRATEGY

## Goal

Governance

State Goals  
and Road Map

Data

## Policy

State Policy &  
Protocols on  
Expulsion

Policies related  
to Program  
Characteristics

Child Care  
Assistance

Work  
Conditions

## Supports

Hotline/Triage

Training &  
Coaching

IECMH  
Consultation

QRIS

Alignment of  
TA Providers

## Services

Developmental  
Screening &  
Referral


Early  
Intervention &  
Special  
Education

Health, Mental  
Health, and  
Family Support

Cross-cutting: Family Partnerships and Racial & Gender Equity



# State Policy Design

Design Questions	Options
<b>Where does it sit or what is the mechanism?</b>	Legislation, attached to a funding stream, rule in licensing, RFP requirement, etc.
<b>Who does it impact?</b>	Providers who accept subsidy, all licensed providers, etc.
<b>What does the policy say and how explicit is it?</b>	<p>Continuum...</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Not allowed</li><li>Requires due process &amp; approval</li><li>Requires program-level action</li><li>Offers guidance</li><li>Nothing specific</li></ul>

# Does your state have a framework?

- Is there a goal or vision?
- Who is making the decisions?
- Is there a Theory of Change/Action?
- Are there shared definitions of expulsion and suspension? Shared definitions of what to promote, e.g. adult-child interactions?
- Does data exist on prevalence, what is happening in programs, outcomes of the supports?

## In summary, Expulsion is...

- An adult decision
- Not a single-factor problem & requires a multi-pronged approach
- A problem that requires a continuum of supports
- Most effectively reduced when all helpers are involved
- Equity requires time and resources

# For More Information...

Carey McCann, BUILD Initiative

[cmccann@buildinitiative.org](mailto:cmccann@buildinitiative.org)

