

## STATE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

### SUSPENSION & EXPULSION IN PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT STATES: POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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There is growing unease about suspension and expulsion of children at the preschool level. Preschoolers are expelled at three times the rate of K-12 students (Gilliam, 2005). Boys—particularly African-American boys—comprise a disproportionate number of these cases, a fact that has caused concern among parents, policymakers, and advocates alike. These suspensions and expulsions have broad-ranging impacts on children and families across the country.

States that received the Preschool Development Grant<sup>1</sup> (PDG) funding have begun to explore and implement policies and practices to mitigate this growing problem. This brief is intended to serve as a resource to these and other states. It sets the stage by detailing why preschool expulsion and suspension rates should matter to states. There is a discussion of relevant federal and state policies as well as various state practices used to impact this issue. The brief concludes with appendices that include excerpts of PDG states' policies or guidelines, and descriptions of their preventive practices.

#### **PRESCHOOL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION: WHY IT MATTERS FOR STATES**

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (2002), an estimated four to six percent of preschoolers have serious emotional and behavioral disorders, and 16-30 percent pose continual problems to classroom teachers. Confronted with such behaviors, some early childhood educators are turning to expulsion and suspension.

In recent years, these expulsions and suspensions have garnered a number of media reports—stories of young children being expelled for seemingly minor offenses such as biting, kicking off their shoes, or potty training accidents (Anderson, 2015). Such coverage has fueled the public's concern about this trend and its implications for children and families. For example, removing children from a socially and cognitively enriching preschool setting may hinder their academic and socio-emotional growth or prolong the time it takes for them to receive the services they need to thrive (ED/HHS, 2014; Schimke, 2015; Zeanah, Jr. & Melmed, 2015). An urgent need and/or inability to find alternative child care for expelled children may also require parents or guardians to take time off from work, a practice that—over time—may threaten their ability to hold down a job (St. George, 2012). Some families and policymakers are worried that particular groups are being unfairly targeted by expulsion and suspension practices. These concerns are supported by statistics showing that boys, African-Americans, and children with disabilities represent a disproportionately high number of preschool expulsions and suspensions (Gilliam, 2014; St. George, 2012).

Preschool expulsions and suspensions have long-term implications, as well. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) warn that “young students who are expelled or suspended are as much as ten times more likely to drop out of high school, experience academic failure and grade retention, hold negative school attitudes, and face incarceration than those who are not” (ED/HHS, 2014, p. 3). While this statement does not prove a cause-effect relationship, it reinforces many experts' belief that exclusionary practices at the preschool level do not prevent future incidences of behavioral problems (Maag, 2012).

<sup>1</sup> The Preschool Development Grants competition is intended to help states establish or enhance high-quality preschool programs, particularly in target communities (those with low- and/or moderate-income families). For more information, visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html>.

## THE FEDERAL RESPONSE

Collective concern about the issues above has spurred action from federal policy leaders. These leaders have voiced a strong belief that preschool expulsions and suspensions are detrimental to children and families. These beliefs are made especially clear in the following documents, both of which have received significant attention from states.

### JOINT FEDERAL POLICY STATEMENT

On December 10, 2014, then-Secretary Arne Duncan (ED) and Secretary Sylvia Burwell (HHS) released a joint policy statement intended “to support families, early childhood programs, and States by providing recommendations from the ED and HHS for preventing and severely limiting expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings” (ED/HHS, 2014, p. 1). Their recommendations included the following:

To read the Joint Statement, visit <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf>.

- Establish early childhood suspension and expulsion policies
- Clearly communicate these policies to stakeholders and ensure non-discriminatory implementation
- Set goals for improvement (e.g., develop a roadmap for ending PK suspension and expulsion), and use data to assess progress (e.g., align early childhood data systems with preschool systems)
- Invest in workforce preparation and development; implement early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) programs; and adopt a statewide positive behavioral intervention and support (PBIS) framework
- Establish and implement policies regarding program quality (e.g., group sizes, child/adult ratios, developmentally appropriate curricula, access to accommodations and supports)
- Access free resources to develop and scale best practices

Since its publication, the policy statement has stimulated responses from several states, often in the form of new legislation and quality improvement initiatives. Several examples of these responses are detailed in the Preschool Development States’ Policies on Expulsion (Excerpts) and Notable Preschool Development Grant Practices.

### THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014

Just a few weeks before ED/HHS released its policy statement on early childhood suspension and expulsion, President Obama signed the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 (CCDBG), reauthorizing the Child Care Development Fund program. Under the Act, states must comply with several new eligibility requirements, including the following:

To read the Act, visit <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s1086/text>.

(1) states must devote a portion of their funds to at least one of the recommended quality improvement activities such as “including effective behavior management strategies and training, including positive behavior interventions and support models, that promote positive social and emotional development and reduce challenging behaviors, including reducing expulsions of preschool-aged children for such behaviors,” and (2) states must disseminate consumer education information to parents, the public, and child care providers, which may include information about Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and expulsion and suspension policies (OCC, 2015).

The joint policy statement on expulsion and suspension and the CCDBG Act of 2014 sent a strong message to states about where the federal government stands on preschool expulsion and suspension. States, in turn, have responded. They have begun systematic, cross-program and departmental strategic planning and policy development that include supports to children and families with a focus on prevention.

## PDG STATES' RESPONSE

The federal response to the suspension and expulsion issues has inspired PDG states' early learning leadership to establish new or revise policies and/or preventative strategies that align and take into consideration the recommended best practices. These efforts are in the early stages of development and represent best thinking about whether expulsions should be allowed, and if so, the process for response prior to expulsion, ways to prevent expulsion, and supportive strategies for families that link them to services that may address challenges they are facing with their children.

States are establishing workgroups to determine what policies for expulsion need to be developed or revised. Professional development, coaching and technical assistance, and resources that focus on young children's mental health and social emotional development are at the forefront, with most of the attention being given to prevention. Federal grant funding for states' preschool programs has expanded opportunities for cross-departmental collaboration on these issues at the state level. These efforts are aimed at combatting the mitigating circumstances that lead to children's expulsion from early learning settings.

To date, many states have not articulated a formal policy for suspension and expulsion for their early childhood programs. Instead, they use their program guidelines or rely on school district pre-K-12 policies or child care licensing requirements to broadly address programs' response to children's challenging behaviors. Variations in policies across state departments or early learning programs that braid funds or contract for slots across program types can confuse the issue.<sup>2</sup> For example, New Jersey's state funded preschool programs adhere to *Preschool Student Suspension/Expulsion Guidance* that references N.J.A.C.6A:13A-4.4(g) policy that prohibits expulsion. The *New Jersey Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers* allows centers to develop written policies on expulsion. However, state or federally funded classrooms that operate within a child care center would need to follow the *Preschool Student Suspension/Expulsion Guidance*.

The current status of the suspension and expulsion policies of the 18 Preschool Development Grant states can be categorized in three primary ways:

1. Policies that prohibit expulsion;
2. Policies that require preventative measures but allow expulsion as a last resort; and
3. No explicit expulsion policy but use guidance or less formalized means to address expulsion.

Detailed information on these policies can be found in Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Table 1, Preschool Development Grantees' Status on Expulsion

In **Maine**, the Maine Children's Growth Council, a committee led by the Early Childhood Advisory Council is taking a systems approach to policy development.



**Hawaii's** Early Childhood Advisory Council is supporting a workgroup that has developed a policy that emphasizes prevention and family relationships.



In **Arkansas**, a multi-disciplinary workgroup is striving to align its child care policies with those of the state-funded Arkansas Better Chance Pre-K program.



The state team from **New York** representing multiple departments, developed a field memo, with the goal that by 2017, expulsions in all early childhood programs will be prohibited.



## PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS' STATUS ON EXPULSION

Table 1 details the Preschool Development Grant states' current expulsion policies and practices. This table explains the types of programs in which each state's Preschool Development Grant classrooms are located. It specifies whether there is written policy or guidance that specifically references expulsion for PDG programs. The chart's columns for state pre-k, school district and licensed child care refer to written expulsion policies that differ from those that have been established for PDG programs.

**Table 1: Preschool Development Grantees' Status on Expulsion**

		Early Childhood Program Types that house PDG classrooms	Preschool Development Grant Programs	State Pre-K (Other than PDG)	School District Policies** (Listed if no other pre-k policies apply)	Licensed Child Care (Listed if no other pre-k policies apply)
Alabama	All PDG programs, regardless of program setting, follow the same policy	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	Expulsion requires state approval; use of prevention and intervention strategies needed before expulsion***	Expulsion requires state approval; use of prevention and intervention strategies needed before expulsion***		
Arizona	PDG programs in all settings are provided with guidance that links to school code	Public/charter school programs, child care, Head Start, Other	Guidance addresses expulsion in relation to A.R.S. 15-841.		School code ARS 15-841	Child care-specific policy in development
Arkansas	All PDG programs, regardless of program setting, follow the same PDG-developed policy	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	Expulsion requires state approval; use of prevention and intervention strategies needed before expulsion	Expulsion requires state approval; use of prevention and intervention strategies needed before expulsion		
Connecticut	All PDG programs, regardless of program setting, follow the same PDG-developed policy	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	Defined PDG policy based on school code prohibition		School code prohibits expansion for grades pre-k through 2nd grade	
Hawaii	PDG programs follow Charter School policy	Charter Schools	No policy	Operate independently of PDG, no policy		Draft policy in process that will apply to all early childhood settings
Illinois	All PDG programs, regardless of setting, follow the Preschool for All guidance as well as the PDG addendum	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	No additional policy in PDG addendum to Implementation Manual	Implementation Manual describes federal position paper on suspension and expulsion		
Louisiana	PDG classrooms follow either L4 policy or NSECD guidance, depending on where they are located	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	L4 districts follow district policies; NSECD use guidance for intervention plan	NSECD guidance that requires an intervention plan	L4 classrooms follow local school district policy	
Maine	PDG classrooms follow the policies of the setting in which they are located	School District, Head Start	No PDG policy	No policy	PDG classrooms follow school code	Planning workgroup to develop policy
Maryland	PDG programs follow the policies of the setting in which they are located	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	School code is used as guidance	School code is used as guidance	PDG classrooms follow school code	School code is used as guidance

**Table 1: Preschool Development Grantees' Status on Expulsion (continued)**

		Early Childhood Program Types that house PDG classrooms	Preschool Development Grant Programs	State Pre-K (Other than PDG)	School District Policies** (Listed if no other pre-k policies apply)	Licensed Child Care (Listed if no other pre-k policies apply)
Massachusetts	<i>PDG programs comply with the regulations of the setting in which they are located</i>	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	No policy	No policy	PDG classrooms follow school code	Child care licensing includes a policy. Most Head Start programs are licensed
Montana	<i>PDG's Head Start classrooms adhere to its policy</i>	School District, Head Start	No policy			
Nevada	<i>PDG's Head Start classrooms adhere to its policy</i>	School District, Head Start	No policy	No policy		Cross-departmental draft in process
New Jersey	<i>All PDG (and Pre-K) programs, regardless of program setting, follow the same legislated guidance</i>	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	Legislated prohibition of expulsion	Legislated prohibition of expulsion	Legislated prohibition of expulsion	Allows expulsion with written notice
New York	<i>PDG classroom adhere to NY's Universal Pre-K regulation or PDG requirements whichever is greater</i>	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	2015 Field Memo limiting and reducing suspension and expulsion for all early childhood programs, with an anticipated 2017-18 date for full prohibition	2015 Field Memo limiting and reducing suspension and expulsion for all early childhood programs, with an anticipated 2017-18 date for full prohibition		
Rhode Island	<i>All PDG programs, regardless of program setting, follow the same PDG-developed policy</i>	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	PDG Guidance has an inclusionary policy that specifies no expulsion		Prekindergarten programs housed within school districts <i>may</i> follow locally-determined school district policies	
Tennessee	<i>All PDG programs, regardless of program setting, follow the Voluntary Pre-K guidance</i>	Child Care, Head Start, School District, Other*	PDG follows same guidance as state pre-k	Expulsion requires state approval; use of prevention and intervention strategies needed before expulsion		
Vermont	<i>PDG and state funded programs are required to be licensed and will follow licensing regulations</i>	Child care, Head Start, School District, Other*	No policy until July 2016	No policy until July 2016		Written policy required (effective July 2016)
Virginia	<i>PDG classrooms adhere to the policy of the setting in which they are housed</i>	School District, Community-based organizations	No policy	No policy	PDG classrooms follow locally-determined policies	

\*Other refers to additional agencies that may deliver pre-k such as non-profits, private schools, tribal, faith-based schools, higher education, community agencies, etc.

Head Start's expulsion policies are federally-dictated and universal; all Head Start programs, regardless of where they are housed will comply with those requirements or the state-specific policy, whichever is greater.

\*\* It is assumed that school districts have safe school policies that include detailed steps and strategies for suspension and expulsion that apply for all of their students, prekindergarten through grade 12, unless otherwise noted.

\*\*\* Beginning in 2016-17, Alabama's policy will be removed and replaced with connections to resources and supports.

## INTEGRATION OF PDG AND RELATED STATE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

While PDG states are in differing stages of crafting and implementing explicit suspension and expulsion policies, they are more uniform in their efforts to support children's behavior. They are using classroom positive guidance, professional development related to social and emotional and early childhood mental health, coaching and technical assistance and family partnerships. Intervention teams, referral processes, consultation and technical assistance, along with professional development combine to weave a system of comprehensive and successful prevention and intervention strategies. These systems span infant, toddler and preschool, special education, child care, Head Start and public funded preschool, and include supports to children, teachers and families. While not directly related to expulsion, these processes effectively relegate expulsion in many cases as a last-resort or non-existent "solution".

Key areas, identified within the PDG guidance as quality elements for preschool, set the stage and demonstrate ways in which states have been supporting children's social emotional growth and development and provide families with related services as needed. These are: comprehensive services including mental health screenings and referrals, the alignment of states' early learning standards and guidelines, and strong foundations in social emotional development for teachers through professional development.

### COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

The PDG's requirement to include comprehensive services as a quality standard for program implementation has enhanced supports to families and schools and directly impacted referrals for mental health or other related services related to children's challenging behaviors.<sup>3</sup> Enhanced partnerships among community agencies have resulted in more coordinated and aligned services for families.

PDG also requires more intentional partnerships with families; such efforts strengthen the families' roles in the intervention process when concerns about children's behaviors arise. Connecticut cited Walter Gilliam's philosophy, "expulsion is not a child behavior, it's an adult action" and voiced their commitment to the development of family-director relationships and the family engagement work that still is necessary in order to positively impact this issue.

### EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

States' early learning and development standards or guidelines (ELDS) articulate what children should know or be able to do. The standards present teachers with instructional strategies to promote social emotional

<sup>3</sup> The Preschool Development Grant guidance defines comprehensive services as services that include (a) Screenings for hearing, vision, dental, health (including mental health), and development, as well as referrals and assistance obtaining services, when appropriate; (b) Culturally and linguistically responsive family engagement opportunities (taking into account home language), such as parent conferences (including parent input about their child's development) and support services, such as parent education, and leadership opportunities, such as a Parent Advisory Committee; (c) Nutrition services, including nutritious meals and snack options aligned with requirements set by the most recent Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines promulgated by the Department of Agriculture, as well as regular, age-appropriate, nutrition education for children and their families; (d) Services coordinated with LEAs and early intervention service providers and other entities providing services under part C and section 619 of part B of IDEA; (e) Physical activity services aligned with evidence-based guidelines, such as those recommended by the Institute of Medicine,<sup>12</sup> and which take into account and accommodate children with disabilities; (f) Partnerships with and linkages to community services to enhance family well-being, such as income supports, food pantries, housing, social services, and other services relating to health/mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, adult literacy, education and training, and financial asset building; (g) On-site coordination of services, to the maximum extent feasible; and (h) Additional support services, determined by the State, as appropriate.

PDG funds in **Rhode Island** are helping programs identify services within communities and to maintain and keep current referrals to support children and families.



**Illinois'** comprehensive service delivery is similar to Head Start's model and prioritizes the development of relationships with families. Staff address both families' and children's needs that may impact challenging behaviors in group settings such as mental health or substance abuse. Mental health consultants provide supports to PDG classrooms and work with both teachers and families.



development and support PDG programs' instructional implementation practices. Many states are revising their standards and aligning them to younger and older age groups to emphasize children's development along a continuum. ELDS help teachers understand children's development and support teachers' appropriate responses to children's behaviors. The 2015 revised learning and development standards in Vermont span birth through grade 3 and reflect the state's vision for young children in the area of social and emotional development. Louisiana's early learning and development standards are displayed sequentially, birth to age 5, and demonstrate how they are aligned with the state's kindergarten standards. Massachusetts has a separate document, released in 2015 that focuses on standards for social emotional development and approaches to play for preschool and kindergarten. These standards promote early educational practices that support emotional well-being, pro-social behavior and social competence.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

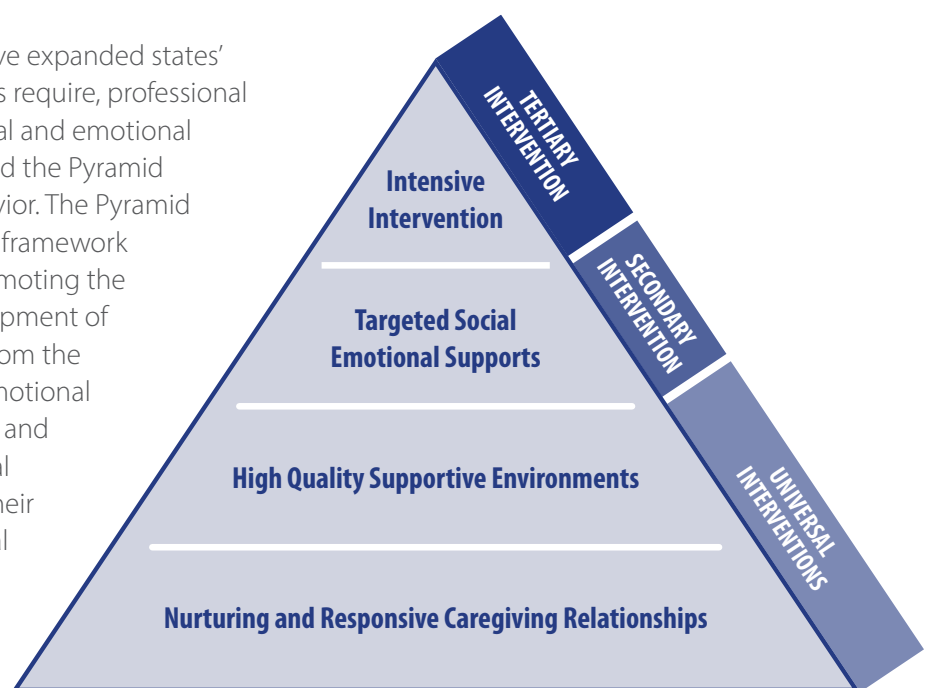
Through PDG funding, many states have extended early childhood mental health efforts by adding related professional development and on-site coaching to its programs. Through specialized professional development, onsite observations and reflective supervision models coaches provide insightful opportunities to strengthen interactional practices that impact children's interactions within their environment. The focus is on the reduction or elimination of the behaviors through prevention strategies to reduce expulsion. Montana's PDG classrooms, for example, are visited by coaches 5-8 times per month.

Consultation from mental health specialists provides an additional layer of support. Specific children who have exhibited challenging behaviors may be identified for observations by consultants who can offer on-site guidance strategies, resources and work with both teachers and families to develop plans to promote the children's successful school experience. Arizona's PDG classrooms can connect with mental health consultants through their participation in the state's Quality Improvement Rating System, "Quality First".

Effective intervention practices bring together professionals and families to review opportunities for changes in practice, provide new resources, and offer referrals to services and programs that support children's well-being and successful participation in a group setting.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Preschool Development Grant funds have expanded states' opportunities to offer, and in some cases require, professional development focused on children's social and emotional development. Many states have adopted the Pyramid approach to supporting children's behavior. The Pyramid approach provides a tiered intervention framework of evidence-based interventions for promoting the social, emotional, and behavioral development of young children. States have benefited from the work of The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Interventions (TACSEI) with their focus on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5 using the Pyramid model. CSEFEL



and TACSEI have developed extensive, user-friendly training materials, videos, and print resources to support professional development. These resources are available directly from each Center's respective websites.<sup>4</sup>

PDG states have adopted CSEFEL's and TACSEI's proven strategies as the framework for a statewide model of professional development and teacher-focused supports. PDG funds have been used to provide Pyramid-related on-site coaching and technical assistance. State funds are often blended with federal funds to offer statewide training supporting children's social emotional development.

Arkansas embeds the Pyramid approach in much of its professional development, extending beyond social emotional training into other areas of children's development. New Jersey has provided extensive training in TACSEI, CSEFEL and the Pyramid Approach. The state's districts, including those with PDG funds, have preschool intervention and referral teams that rely on the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT). Statewide, Virginia's early childhood teachers benefit from PDG-funded training and technical assistance which has impacted early education providers outside of PDG programs.



Five PDG states, **Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Tennessee and Vermont**, have worked intensively with CSEFEL to receive strategic planning around social and emotional outcomes for children and to identify the gaps in services and resources to determine what additional efforts are needed. As a result, they are able to take a more statewide approach to service delivery and provide training, typically through the use of a cadre of trained instructors, for the child care and pre-kindergarten community.

**Nevada**, a TACSEI state, uses a Train the Trainers model to assure the state's early childhood teachers receive professional development.



## STATES' DATA COLLECTION

Variations in data collection and reporting related to young children's expulsion are evident. Federal and state reports paint a dramatic picture of children being expelled; however the data are inconsistent across early learning programs. Of the 18 Preschool Development States, few currently collect public-funded preschool-specific data about expulsions, independent of school district programming.

Children's preschool exit data from Alabama, Louisiana, and Maryland indicate that children are more likely to be expelled for poor attendance than behavioral reasons. In many instances, students simply transfer or move. Some states (e.g., Arkansas) collect data on how many children leave programs but not their reasons for leaving (e.g., expulsion). Other states (e.g., Illinois, Tennessee) do not include expulsion as an option in their data collection.

In the cases where school districts are submitting preschool expulsion data as part of their K-12 reporting requirements, early childhood leaders felt these data were not accurate. Disaggregated data by grade, localized expulsion policies, reporting for specialized preschool populations (e.g., children with Individual Education Plans), and combining suspension and expulsion data, compromise the accuracy and usefulness of these data.

PDG states with intervention practices or case management teams are typically tracking the number of children being referred for case management or for additional classroom support and resources. While not specifically related to expulsion, they offer a picture of those children who may have been at risk without the preventative or mental health strategies provided.

<sup>4</sup> CSEFEL is a national resource center funded by the Office of Head Start and Child Care Bureau for disseminating research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs across the country. <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>. TACSEI, funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs assist states to build their capacity to implement and scale-up evidence based practices to support the social emotional competency of children with, or at risk for, delays or disabilities. <http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/index.htm>

## CONCLUSION

The federal concern for children's social emotional development and well-being has been heard by Preschool Development Grant states. While not a new concern or one that has not been considered previously, they are using the federal position paper and new child care requirements as guidance to establish workgroups and committees to develop policies that impact upon program's response to children's social and emotional behavior. These policies include professional development for teachers, classroom quality indicators, and comprehensive services that engage families and provide for referrals.

At the same time, PDG states are committed to supporting young children's mental health and developing their social and emotional skills. States have created strong systems of prevention and intervention, building on partnerships with families, research-based developmentally-appropriate practices for teachers, and the implementation of collaborative programs across early childhood departments. PDG funding has afforded states opportunities to expand their intervention and prevention programs, not just for their PDG classrooms, but statewide. This, in turn, has the potential to reduce the number of expulsions of preschool children.

In contrast, states' policies on expulsion in preschool can be inconsistent across and within states. The varied early learning program types may operate differently, sometimes requiring different standard operating practices; with some following regulations or policies, others receiving guidance, and a few having no clear directive. Within this context, the joint federal policy statement from ED/HHS and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 have recommended states adopt policies that encourage cross-department coordination and a broad-stroke approach that includes referrals and services for families, professional development for teachers, on-site classroom supports for children, and a data-collection process.

Children's opportunities for positive quality preschool kindergarten experiences are strengthened when states link their social emotional and mental health supports with policy decisions on expulsion. A systems approach that intentionally builds or expands existing prevention and intervention efforts with cross-departmental, unified strategies will efficiently and effectively support children's social and emotional development and classroom successes. These strategies must be comprehensive and consider the child, family, and teacher. In developing such systems, all states can respond to children's behavioral challenges and reduce the need for expulsion.

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\*All 18 Preschool Development Grant states' legislation, preschool program guidance, and funding applications were reviewed for information about expulsion.

## APPENDIX A: PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT STATES' POLICIES ON EXPULSION (EXCERPTS)\*

STATE	POLICY
Alabama	<p><i>Alabama First Class Pre-K Program Guidelines*</i>  <a href="http://children.alabama.gov/uploadedFiles/File/OSR_program_guidelines_20152016_v2cmiles.pdf">http://children.alabama.gov/uploadedFiles/File/OSR_program_guidelines_20152016_v2cmiles.pdf</a></p> <p>CF 3.3 Dismissal Due to Chronic Tardiness or Chronic Absenteeism  Providers are required to document efforts to assist parents/guardians of children who do not attend on a regular basis, are routinely late, or routinely leave the program early in improving attendance. A meeting with the parent/guardian should occur to determine the reason(s) for the problem and identify ways to resolve the problem. Inability to resolve the problem after documented interventions should be referred for dismissal consideration.</p> <p>CF 4.2-4.6 Programs must follow the procedures outlined below regarding modified attendance, suspension, or dismissal. Detailed processes and steps are provided for Modified Attendance (first step), Immediate Suspension, Extended Suspension and Dismissal.</p> <p>CF 4.6 Procedures for Dismissal (requires prior approval)  It is the intent of OSR that no child is dismissed from the First Class program unless absolutely necessary. Once a child has been enrolled, he/she cannot be dismissed from the pre-K program unless one of the following occurs: chronically disruptive, documented habitual pattern of behavior, repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the other students to learn; and/or causing harm to himself/herself or others, involves three (3) or more incidents of aggression that could cause serious injury and significant property damage or destruction....</p> <p><i>*Beginning in 2016-17, Alabama's suspension and expulsion policy will be removed from their Guidelines document and replaced with connections to resources and supports.</i></p>
Arizona	<p><i>Preschool Development Grant Guidance Manual:</i>  <a href="http://www.azed.gov/early-childhood/files/2015/05/pdg-guidance-manual-5.11.2015-final.pdf">http://www.azed.gov/early-childhood/files/2015/05/pdg-guidance-manual-5.11.2015-final.pdf</a></p> <p>Children in early learning environments are expelled from programs at an alarming rate. Sub-grantees of the PDG should consider that they are providing a critical early grade for young children. Children should not be expelled for behavioral issues; instead the sub-grantee should work with families and specialists in order to provide children and families connections to the services they need to successfully participate. Local sub-grantees should review local policy and only consider expulsion in terms of the conditions of A.R.S. 15-841</p> <p>ARS 15-841: Defines Responsibilities of pupils; expulsion; alternative education programs; community service; placement review committee. <a href="http://www.azleg.state.az.us/ars/15/00841.htm">http://www.azleg.state.az.us/ars/15/00841.htm</a></p> <p>B. A pupil may be expelled for continued open defiance of authority, continued disruptive or disorderly behavior, violent behavior that includes use or display of a dangerous instrument or a deadly weapon as defined in section 13-105, use or possession of a gun, or excessive absenteeism. A school district may expel pupils for actions other than those listed in this subsection as the school district deems appropriate.</p>
Arkansas	<p><i>Arkansas Better Chance Rules</i>  <a href="http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/abc_docs/ABCrules.pdf">http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/abc_docs/ABCrules.pdf</a></p> <p>14.01 No child in ABC shall be dismissed or expelled from the program for behavior without approval from DCCECE.</p>
Connecticut	<p><i>Substitute Senate Bill No. 105, Public Act No. 15-96: An Act Concerning Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions for Students in Preschool and Grades Kindergarten to Two</i> <a href="https://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/ACT/PA/2015PA-00096-R00SB-01053-PA.htm">https://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/ACT/PA/2015PA-00096-R00SB-01053-PA.htm</a></p> <p>Sec. 4 of this act applies to preschool programs operated under a local or regional board of education, state or local charter school, or magnet school. The bill states that no preschool program provider, as defined above, shall expel any child, except an expulsion hearing shall be conducted whenever there is reason to believe that the child was in possession of a firearm on or off school grounds or at a preschool program-sponsored event. The child shall be expelled for one calendar year if it is determined that the child did possess a firearm. A preschool program provider may modify the period of expulsion for a child on a case-by-case basis. The bill also states that a preschool program provider, as defined above, may only authorize an in-school suspension.</p>
Hawaii	There is no current written policy for preschool.

STATE	POLICY
Illinois	<p><i>Preschool For All Implementation Manual (Applies to Preschool Development Grant classrooms)</i>  <a href="http://isbe.net/earlychi/preschool/pfa-implementation-manual/social-emotional-learning.pdf">http://isbe.net/earlychi/preschool/pfa-implementation-manual/social-emotional-learning.pdf</a></p> <p>Social Emotional Section: Expulsion and Suspension  The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education issued an introduction letter and Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings to assist states and public and private early childhood programs in partnering to prevent and severely limit expulsions and suspensions in early learning settings. Recent data indicate that expulsions and suspensions occur at high rates in preschool settings. This is particularly troubling given that research suggests that school expulsion and suspension practices are associated with negative educational and life outcomes. Early suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary discipline practices contribute to setting many young children's educational trajectories in a negative direction from the beginning. This has long term consequences for children, their families, and the schools that they will later attend. In addition, stark racial and gender disparities exist in these practices, with young boys of color being suspended and expelled much more frequently than other children. These disturbing trends warrant immediate attention from the early childhood and education fields to prevent, severely limit, and work toward eventually eliminating expulsion and suspension and ensuring the safety and well-being of young children in early learning settings.</p>
Louisiana	<p><i>2015–2016 Requirements and Guidelines for Public School (L4) and Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development (NSECD) Prekindergarten Programs</i> <a href="http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/early-childhood/2014-15-requirements-and-guidelines.pdf">http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/early-childhood/2014-15-requirements-and-guidelines.pdf</a></p> <p>L4 Requirement, NSECD Guidance: A child may be dis-enrolled from the program, at the discretion of the district, if he/she fails to meet the 74% attendance requirement for two consecutive months due to unexcused absences. Suspensions or expulsions of children should be an action of last resort, and ONLY after the program has exhausted every means possible (counseling, mental health evaluation, SBLC meeting, etc.) to address challenges exhibited.</p> <p>2014 Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 134 requested that the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) examine and consider the status of school suspensions and expulsions, as well as plans to revise current school discipline policies in response to the "Supportive School Discipline Initiative" launched by the United States Departments of Education and Justice.</p>
Maine	There is no current written policy for preschool.
Maryland	There is no current written policy for preschool.
Massachusetts	<p><i>Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Family Child Care; Small Group and School Age and Large Group and School Age Child Care Programs: 606 CMR 7.00:17 (i)</i> <a href="http://www.mass.gov/courts/docs/lawlib/600-699cmr/606cmr7.pdf">http://www.mass.gov/courts/docs/lawlib/600-699cmr/606cmr7.pdf</a></p> <p>"The licensee must describe in writing the program's procedures for avoiding the suspension or termination of a child from the program due to challenging behavior. The procedures to avoid suspension and termination must include: 1. providing an opportunity to meet with parents to discuss options other than suspension or termination; 2. offering referrals to parents for evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services; 3. pursuing options for supportive services to the program, including consultation and educator training; 4. developing a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program"</p>
Montana	There is no current written policy for preschool.
Nevada	There is no current written policy for preschool.

STATE	POLICY
New Jersey	<p><i>New Jersey Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs</i> Preschool Student Suspension/Expulsion Guidance  <a href="http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/psguide/suspension.htm">http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/psguide/suspension.htm</a></p> <p>"In light of recent media attention and discussion regarding suspension/expulsion of preschool students, it is necessary to remind all superintendents, supervisors and directors that under state regulations, N.J.A.C. 6A:13A-4.4(g), "Preschool students in a general education program or special education program shall not be suspended, long-term or short-term, and shall not be expelled." Our goal in the Abbott Preschool Program is to prepare young children to succeed in school and suspending or expelling children fails to accomplish that goal. More importantly, suspending or expelling preschoolers is not an age-appropriate method for addressing behavioral problems. There are no short-term or long-term outcomes that will benefit a child when he/she cannot be in school to receive the needed support services due to out of school disciplinary measures.</p> <p>Preschool students in a general education program or special education program shall not be suspended, long-term or short-term, and shall not be expelled." Our goal in the Abbott Preschool Program is to prepare young children to succeed in school and suspending or expelling children fails to accomplish that goal. More importantly, suspending or expelling preschoolers is not an age-appropriate method for addressing behavioral problems. There are no short-term or long-term outcomes that will benefit a child when he/she cannot be in school to receive the needed support services due to out of school disciplinary measures. . . . . Challenging behaviors exhibited by preschool children must be addressed in the context of a comprehensive approach to behavior support that is designed to teach, nurture and encourage positive social behaviors. Districts should seek to involve families, administrators, teachers and other auxiliary staff to provide support to children and prepare them for successful preschool experiences.</p> <p>As more preschoolers enroll in the program, there will be an increase in the challenging behaviors exhibited by children. To that end, the Office of Early Childhood has funded one preschool intervention and referral team (PIRT) for every 750 preschool students. In districts with less than 750 preschool children, one team is allocated for every 750 children in preschool through grade three. Although the primary role of the PIRT is to increase inclusion of children in general preschool classrooms and decrease referrals for special education, the PIRT also serves as an essential resource to preschool classroom staff to modify children's behaviors that block successful participation in a general preschool classroom. Preschool staff can also learn to adapt teaching practices to assist all children in meeting the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards. Members of the PIRT will also plan and implement professional development and coordinate with district special services department and child study teams to ensure seamless preschool programming. In cases where problem behaviors cannot be adequately addressed through the implementation of behavior support plans, the PIRT can refer children directly to the school district Child Study Team as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6a:14.</p> <p>Challenging behaviors exhibited by preschool children must be addressed in the context of a comprehensive approach to behavior support that is designed to teach, nurture and encourage positive social behaviors. Districts should seek to involve families, administrators, teachers and other auxiliary staff to provide support to children and prepare them for successful preschool experiences."</p> <p><i>Child Care Licensing</i> <a href="http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf">http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf</a>  10:122-6.8</p> <p>(j) The center shall develop and follow a written policy on the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The expulsion policy shall include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The circumstances under which a child may be expelled;</li> <li>ii. The method that the center will use to notify parents of concerns that could lead to expulsion, such as written notification or a parent conference;</li> <li>iii. Sufficient time limits before expulsion to enable parents to make alternative child care arrangements or to take the necessary corrective action to allow the child to remain at the center, except as specified in (j)1iv below; and</li> <li>iv. Circumstances that may warrant immediate expulsion of a child from the center, such as potentially dangerous behavior by a child or parent.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. The center shall not expel a child based solely on the child's parent making a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing regulations, or questioning a center directly regarding policies and procedures.</li> <li>3. The center shall give a copy of the expulsion policy to the parent of each enrolled child.</li> <li>4. The center shall secure and maintain on file a record of each parent's signature attesting to receipt of the expulsion policy.</li> <li>5. If the center determines to expel a child, the center shall maintain on file a record of the circumstances, parental notification and corrective action taken.</li> </ol>

STATE	POLICY
New York	<p><i>July 2015 State Education Department Field Memo</i></p> <p>In discussion with the Board of Regents at their May 2015 meeting, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) committed to take steps to reduce and severely limit expulsion and suspension practices, with the ultimate goal of eliminating these practices in all early childhood settings by the 2017-2018 school year. In addition, NYSED will review and, as appropriate, revise its statewide policies and guidance regarding suspension and expulsion of preschool children from early childhood programs, including special education programs.</p> <p>All regular and special education early childhood programs are urged to review their school's practices and take steps to ensure that high-quality behavioral and social-emotional supports are in place to prevent suspensions and expulsions of preschool children. Programs should minimally ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers use developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive practices and evidence-based curricula aligned with the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core Learning Standards</li> <li>• children have access to comprehensive services and individual accommodations and supports;</li> <li>• discipline policies comply with applicable federal civil rights laws and procedural safeguards under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for all preschool children with disabilities;</li> <li>• programs collect and analyze data on suspensions and expulsions and set goals to limit or prohibit such disciplinary actions;</li> <li>• staff receive professional development on social-emotional and behavioral development; and</li> <li>• programs establish school-wide and tiered supports to address challenging behaviors"</li> </ul>
Rhode Island	<p><i>Rhode Island Department of Education Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Standards for Approval of Preschool and Kindergarten Programs:</i> <a href="http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Instruction-and-Assessment-World-Class-Standards/Early-Childhood/Programs/RIDECECESTANDARDS.pdf">http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Instruction-and-Assessment-World-Class-Standards/Early-Childhood/Programs/RIDECECESTANDARDS.pdf</a></p> <p>5.12 The program shall welcome children and families of all abilities, modify the program, make reasonable accommodations, and collaborate with key partners to support all children. The program shall have a written plan which describes the process for supporting all children including, but not limited to, those with developmental delays and disabilities, mental health diagnosis and behavioral challenges.</p> <p>5.13 The program shall have a written philosophy statement describing the educational beliefs and practices which inform the implementation of a Comprehensive Early Childhood education program, including: ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How all children are welcomed into the program and exclusionary practices of any kind are not allowed (principal of "zero reject");</li> </ul>
Tennessee	<p><i>Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K Dismissal Guidance</i></p> <p>Participation in the TN VPK program is voluntary, and parents can withdraw their child at any time. However, VPK programs cannot dismiss a child due to poor attendance or inappropriate behavior without submitting documentation of the attempted communication with families regarding attendance or development of behavioral intervention plans to address inappropriate behavior to the Tennessee Department of Education, Office of Early Learning. Children with Individual Education Plans (IEP's), receiving services in the TN VPK may not be dismissed unless the IEP Team convenes to discuss and approve a change to provide a more appropriate program or services. <a href="https://www.tn.gov/education/article/voluntary-pre-k-frequently-asked-questions">https://www.tn.gov/education/article/voluntary-pre-k-frequently-asked-questions</a></p> <p>Included in Scope of Services for Voluntary Pre-K (2013-14)  <a href="https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/prek_scope_of_services.pdf">https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/prek_scope_of_services.pdf</a></p> <p>F. Behavior Management and Guidance</p> <p>The Grantee shall: Contact the respective Education Consultant should cause for concern arise regarding a student's behavior or attendance record. The consultant will make suggestions for approaches for dealing with the situation. If intervention proves to be ineffective, the LEA shall provide to the State a written request and justification for permanent dismissal of any child from the pre-K program at the request of the school system. No child is to be permanently dismissed without consultation between, and agreement of, the Grantee and the Tennessee Department of Education.</p>
Vermont	<p>No current policy, but new child care regulations, already announced; will be implemented in September 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All licensed programs will be required to have a policy in writing that includes at least one week's notice for parents.</li> <li>• All pre-k programs are required to be licensed; therefore this will apply for all PDG, public PK programs</li> <li>• Coincides with universal pre-k coming about and new CCDBG plan</li> </ul>
Virginia	<p>There is no current written policy for preschool.</p>

\* These descriptions refer to written policy or guidance that has been developed specifically for preschool. Summaries of state or locally-designed school district preschool to 12th grade suspension and expulsion policies are not included.

## APPENDIX B: NOTABLE PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT PRACTICES

POLICY OR GUIDANCE	
New York	<p>New York's State Education Department issued a July 2015 Field Memo that asks all early childhood settings to make commitments to reduce and severely limit expulsion and suspension practices, with the ultimate goal of eliminating these practices in all early childhood settings by the 2017-2018 school year. The Memo states that the Department will review and, as appropriate, revise its statewide policies and guidance regarding suspension and expulsion of preschool children from early childhood programs, including special education programs.</p> <p>The New York Department of Special Education is promulgating regulations prohibiting expulsion for any child with an Individual Education Plan. (IEP).</p> <p>View the Field Memo and Special Education regulation at: <a href="http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/2015-memos/preschool-suspensions-expulsions-memo-july-2015.pdf">http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/2015-memos/preschool-suspensions-expulsions-memo-july-2015.pdf</a></p>
Tennessee	<p>Tennessee's guidance on suspension and expulsion originated in its Voluntary Pre-K program and has been included in the Scope of Services in its PDG Memorandum of Understanding with subgrantees thus making it binding. The guidance requires documentation of behavioral intervention plans and parental involvement prior to obtaining approval to expel a child from the Department of Education's Office of Early Learning.</p> <p><i>Arkansas and Louisiana have similar guidance strategies.</i></p>
COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES	
Maryland	<p>PDG funds are being used to expand Maryland's Judy Centers that offer comprehensive services to children and families, including screenings, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, including pediatric consultation; intervention strategies including Positive Behavior Improvement Services (PBIS) in public schools; and family service referrals.</p>
MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION	
Rhode Island	<p>Rhode Island has created a new vision for its early childhood mental health program. SUCCESS (Supporting Children's Competencies in Emotional and Social Skills). SUCCESS pairs early learning centers with Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants (ECMHCs) to support the social emotional competencies and behavioral health needs of identified children. ECE expertise through the Center for Early Learning Professionals is focused on promotion and prevention level services and supports while ECMHC expertise (SUCCESS) is focused on intervention level services and supports. The goal of SUCCESS is to stabilize the child's placement in their current setting; to facilitate the development of program, classroom and family action plans which address needs to accomplish this goal; and to provide ongoing case management as needed to monitor activities related to the action plans.</p> <p>PDG funds are used for the referral and needs assessment process and the use of comprehensive services to support children's needs based on classroom observations and case management. PDG is also funding a consultant to conceptualize a process for subgrantees/communities to identify and refer families to services, helping communities identify and stay current with what is available.</p>
Connecticut	<p>Connecticut's Preschool Development Grant subgrantees benefit from intensive early childhood mental health resources and supports. They receive a 12-week core series of on-site observation and consultation, allowing for up to two children with behavioral concerns from each classroom to be referred for additional evaluation and support. Additional professional development about children's social emotional development, determined from individual needs assessments, and coaching are required for PDG teachers.</p>
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COACHING	
Alabama	<p>A state-designed reflective coaching model is implemented in Alabama's First Class pre-kindergarten programs, including its PDG classrooms. The Alabama Reflective Coaching Model (ARC) was designed to give Alabama preschool teachers the support and skills they need in order to provide a high quality environment that supports school readiness. The characteristics related to coaching include the use of shared planning between the learner and coach, observations by and of the learner, participatory action on the part of the learner, promoting the learner's reflection on his or her actions, and feedback by the coach on the learner's reflections.</p>
Arkansas	<p>Arkansas embeds the Pyramid approach throughout its professional development offerings. It implements, statewide, Conscious Discipline®, a comprehensive classroom management program and social-emotional curriculum based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. PDG funds are expanding the state's use of Powerful Interactions, a strengths-based approach to providing technical assistance, mentoring, and coaching based on a cascade model of change with a goal of expanding the current limited trainings to a statewide model, supporting a culture of Powerful Interactions at all levels of the ECE workforce.</p>
Virginia	<p>The Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia and the VPI+ (PDG) coaches work to support PDG programs in implementing strategies for meeting the needs of children who may need extra assistance in the domain of social-emotional development. Each PDG teacher has an individualized PD plan based on data from formative assessments that include the social-emotional domain and from QRIS (CLASS and ECERS) results. In addition, Virginia conducted a procurement process to secure statewide contracts for professional development providers to support early childhood educators in the development of children's school readiness domains, including social and emotional development.</p>
INTEGRATION WITH QUALITY IMPROVEMENT RATING SCALES (QRIS)	
Arizona	<p>Arizona's PDG programs are required to participate in its QRIS program, Quality Stars. Participation offers them access to mental health consultation (Smart Start), inclusion specialists and coaching, health services, family support, and parent education, coordinated through a Quality First coach. Smart Support consultants work directly with teachers to develop strategies for working most effectively with children who may need more support with learning to regulate their own behavior.</p>