

Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

Preventing Preschool Expulsion

An accumulation of strong messages from policymakers and advocates suggests that preschool expulsion is becoming an important target for change. In May 2014, the My Brother's Keeper Task Force--part of an initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential--released its [first report](#) to the President, offering recommendations to "***eliminate suspensions and expulsions in preschool and other early learning settings***," including the use of early childhood mental health consultation. In November 2014, the quality improvement provisions of the reauthorized [Child Care and Development Block Grant](#) required "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.***"

Most tellingly, on December 10, 2014, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Burwell and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan released a [joint policy statement](#) on ***preventing expulsions and suspensions in early learning settings***. The statement notes the high prevalence of preschool expulsions and their association with negative child outcomes, and also offers recommendations to programs and states on strategies and practices to reduce expulsions, including early childhood mental health consultation.

This **Topic of Interest** examines reports and journal articles from the *Research Connections* collection on the prevalence of preschool expulsions. It also highlights evidence on one approach that has shown promise in reducing preschool expulsion: early childhood mental health consultation.



Expulsion Rates

There have been two large-scale, national studies of preschool expulsion rates, which can be found below. One, by Walter Gilliam, uses data from a national survey of state prekindergarten programs to examine preschool expulsion rates. The second, based on the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights' annual data collection, reports on disparities in prekindergarten expulsion rates by race and other characteristics. In addition to these national studies, state-level studies on expulsion rates have been conducted in Colorado, Massachusetts, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, also below.

- [Prekindergarteners left behind: Expulsion rates in state prekindergarten programs \(Gilliam\)](#)
- [Civil Rights Data Collection: Data snapshot: Early childhood education \(U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights\)](#)
- [Influence of behavioral concerns and early childhood expulsions on the development of early childhood mental health consultation in Colorado](#)
- [Preschool and child care expulsion and suspension: Rates and predictors in one state \[Massachusetts\]](#)
- [Licensed child care dismissal study \[North Dakota\]](#)
- [Child retention in Wisconsin child care settings: Understanding the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that impact expulsion and retention in early care and education](#)

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Expulsion Reduction

As discussed in the studies below, early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) creates partnerships between mental health professionals and early childhood teachers that strengthen teachers' capacity to support children's socioemotional and behavioral development. One of ECMHC's aims is to help teachers reduce children's problem behaviors, which are among the most frequently-cited reasons for preschool expulsions. An extensive body of research explores ECMHC's relationship to various child-, teacher-, and program-level outcomes. These selected studies examine ECMHC's associations with preschool expulsion outcomes.

- [Addressing behavioral outcomes in Connecticut's child care centers: An evaluation of the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership \(ECCP\)](#)
- [Healthy Futures: Year one evaluation of early childhood mental health consultation \[District of Columbia\]](#)
- [Healthy Futures: Year two evaluation report \[District of Columbia\]](#)
- [Healthy Futures: Year three evaluation of early childhood mental health consultation \[District of Columbia\]](#)
- [Reducing the risk for preschool expulsion: Mental health consultation for young children with challenging behaviors \[Maryland\]](#)

- [Challenging behavior and expulsion from child care: The role of mental health consultation \[Maryland\]](#)
- [Maryland's early childhood mental health consultation evaluation](#)
- [A pilot study of early childhood mental health consultation for children with behavioral problems in preschool \[Massachusetts\]](#)
- [An interdisciplinary evaluation report of Michigan's Childcare Expulsion Prevention \(CCEP\) initiative](#)
- [Pennsylvania Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program report: July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009](#)
- [Child Care Consultation Pilot Project: Evaluation report \[Washington state\]](#)

Additional Resources

Explore resources in the *Research Connections* collection related to the topic, including [Linking mental health and child care and early education services: A Key Topic Resource List](#) and [updated search results](#).

The American Psychological Association also recently examined the issue, releasing [four posts](#) on its Psychology Benefits Society blog, which demonstrates how psychological science contributes to society.

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Last updated: February 2015

Research Connections is a partnership between the National Center for Children in Poverty at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, and the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research at the Institute for Social Research, the University of Michigan, supported by a grant from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.