Preschool Behavior: A Key Factor - And Strategy - For School Success

Walter S. Gilliam, PhD
Director
Edward Zigler Center in Child Development & Social Policy
Associate Professor of Child Psychiatry & Psychology
Child Study Center
Yale University School of Medicine

Stone Soup 2012
Cromwell, CT
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
October 10, 2012
Primary schools suspend thousands

Practice is widely used in D.C. area; some sent home are as young as 4

by Donna M. George

Thousands of elementary students have been told to stay at home for a week or more after coming in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. The closures have left parents scrambling to find child care and schools trying to adjust to the unexpected disruption.

The closures have come as a result of an ongoing outbreak in the D.C. area, with more than 400 cases reported since the beginning of the school year. The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) has been particularly hard hit, with more than 100 cases reported so far.

In response to the outbreak, DCPS has closed several schools and is working to contact and quarantine all students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus.

A sweep on a solemn night

As Adele rolls in the awards, musicians salute Whitney Houston — who once defined excellence

by Chris Richardson

Whitney Houston's voice, her artistry, and her influence have left a lasting impact on the music industry. From her early days as a star in the background to her triumphant solo career, Houston's music continues to inspire and uplift listeners around the world.

A lifetime Grammy winner, Houston's influence on the music industry cannot be overstated. Her powerful vocals, her iconic style, and her ability to connect with listeners on a deep emotional level have made her a true legend. And now, as Adele takes center stage at the annual Grammy Awards, Houston's influence is on full display.

For many musicians, Houston's legacy serves as a reminder of the importance of dedication, hard work, and a willingness to push oneself beyond one's limits. And as the music world celebrates Adele's incredible talent, they cannot help but pay homage to the one artist who has set the standard for excellence in the industry.
An Image of Challenging Behavior
An Extreme Example
The Arrest of a 5-Year-Old Kindergartener
(St. Petersburg, FL; 03/14/2008)

A kindergartener and the police

In the classroom

In the principal’s office

Note: Just last Friday (04/13/2012) a 6-year-old kindergartener was handcuffed and arrested at school by Millidgeville (GA) police.
Curiosity

- A “dry” study about policy adherence in state-administered preschool programs
- What I saw on the other side of a mirror
- Adding a few questions
NPS Methods Cliffs Notes

- All 52 state preK systems (40 states)
- 3,898 respondents (81.0% response)
- CATI Survey
- Incentives: $10 + letter of appreciation
What Is “Expulsion”? (K-12)

- Varying state definitions (Skiba, Eaton, & Sotoo, 2004)
  - 1 State: > 3 Days
  - 13 States: > 10 Days
  - 1 State: > 15 Days
  - 1 State: > 20 Days
  - 2 States: Rest of semester or more
  - 32 States: Local discretion

- No data supporting effectiveness (Skiba & Rausch, 2006)
What Is “Expulsion”? (PreK)

- No formal definitions

- 18 states disallow expulsion (Barnett, Hustedt, Robin, Schulman, 2005)

- 32 states either explicitly allow expulsion or pass it to local level
  - 8 require documentation
  - 4 require family assistance (referrals)
“Expulsion” from Preschool?

• The Expulsion Question

− Over past 12 months

− Required terminating participation in program

− Behavioral problem

− No transition to more appropriate setting
State-Funded PreK: What?

- State administered & funded
- Serves children 3-4
- Classroom-based
- Goal: School Readiness

State-Funded PreK: Where?

The debate over entrusting Head Start to the states. American Psychologist, 54, 327-343.
State-Funded PreK: Who?

- Public School (not HS): 58%
- Head Start (PS): 14%
- HS (not PS): 29%
- For-Profit Child Care: 13%
- Nonprofit: 15%
- Faith Affiliated: 6%
- Other: 2%

Legend:
- Red: Public School (not HS)
- Blue: Head Start (PS)
- Light Blue: HS (not PS)
- Green: For-Profit Child Care
- Yellow: Nonprofit
- Other: Faith Affiliated
PreK Expulsion Results: Nation

• 10.4% of PreK teachers expelled at least 1 child in past year due to behavior problems

• 1 child (78%); 2 children (15%); 3 children (6%); 4 children (1%)

• PreK Expulsion Rate = 6.7 / 1,000
• K-12 Expulsion Rate = 2.1 / 1,000
Child Care Expulsion Rates

- **Child Rates**
  - Detroit, MI (Grannan et al., 1999; n=127; 28%)
    - Rate = 28/1,000
  - Massachusetts (Gilliam & Shahar, 2006; n=119; 64%)
    - Rate = 27/1,000 (39% Classes)
  - Massachusetts (MA DOE, 2003; n=764; ?%)
    - Rate = 2% expelled; 1% “suggested,” 1% transferred
  - Colorado (Hoover, 2006; n=1,075; 17%)
    - Rate = 10/1,000

- **Center/Classroom Rates**
  - Chicago, IL (Cutler & Gilkerson, 2002; n=195 I/T; 38%)
    - Rate = 42% of Centers
  - Alaska (Alaska CCPO, 2005; n=493; 71%)
    - Rate = 35% Centers
Expulsion Rates (per 1,000)


State PreK Expulsion Rates
Bounced from Preschool

Nursery school delinquents? Some tots are getting the heave-ho for unruly behavior

Just two weeks into the school year, Renee Tucker got a call: Anthony Jr., 4, refused to stay in his seat or listen to instructions. The preschool director, Tonya Elliott of the New Creative Child Care Center in Suitland, Md., suggested the boy had ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and recommended Tucker take him for an evaluation. She promptly made a doctor's appointment, but before the date arrived, Elliott spoke to her again. “She said she couldn't deal with him anymore,” Tucker recalls. “She said he needed more one-on-one attention. I was blown away.”

A therapist Tucker consulted suggested a plausible reason for his agitation: The boy was still coping with the death of his father, Anthony Sr., in an auto accident a year earlier. Elliott says, “We had asked [Tucker] to work with us” but determined “there was something else needed with Anthony that we could not provide for him.”

Having to leave preschool seems an ignominious way to launch one's academic career, but Anthony is hardly alone. A 2006 Yale University study of state-financed classrooms estimated that more than 5,000 U.S. preschoolers are expelled each year—a rate three times higher than in elementary or high schools. While the study was the first of its kind and no comparable statistics are available, experts say there's little doubt preschool expulsions are on the rise. Schools say they are prompted to take such action when a student's behavior—such as hitting, biting or throwing things—interferes with the smooth running of the class. The trend troubles some experts, however, who say too many schools are shirking their responsibility by tossing out, rather than dealing with, tots who act up or lag behind. “We are creating a group of children who are very likely to come to kindergarten with serious problems,” says Dr. Jack Shonkoff, dean of Brandeis University's School for Social Policy and Management.

Behind the drive to expel is the changing nature of preschool itself. While a generation ago most kids
EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS
Baby
LOVE!

BRITNEY & KEVIN AT HOME WITH SON SEAN PRESTON

Christina Aguilera
Wedding Details
International Coverage

“Asilo o scuola di criminalità?”
By Margarita Snegireva. Teachers in preschool institutions who suffer from stress or depression recommend that students should be expelled more often than their emotionally stable colleagues.

Conducted by Yale University’s Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy, the study found that of teachers who reported high job stress, 14.3% also reported one or more expulsions in the last year, while 4.9% of teachers with low job stress reported expulsions.

The expulsions were also linked to high student-teacher ratios – 12.7% of teachers reported an expulsion in classrooms with 12 or more children per adult, compared with 7.7% of teachers who reported an expulsion when there were fewer than eight children per adult.

A Preschool Teacher is a type of early childhood educator who instructs children from infancy to age 5, which stands as the youngest stretch of early childhood education. Early Childhood Education teachers need to span the continuum of children from birth to age 8.

The term "preschool" refers to instruction in non-public arenas such as licensed preschools, childcare centers, family day care centers, home day care centers, center-based programs, federal programs like Head Start, and full or part-day private child centers/day care centers sponsored by religious bodies. The term "pre-kindergarten" refers to those lead teachers who offer instruction in a program for four-year olds funded as part of the state public school system.
TV Play on All Major Stations

ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CNN, BET
Who Gets Expelled?

- 4-year-olds 50% more likely than 3’s
- Boys 3½ times more likely than girls
- African Americans 2 times rate of European Americans; 5 times rate of Asian Americans
High Child-Teacher Ratio Predicts Expulsion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children Per Teacher</th>
<th>% Classrooms Expelling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 8</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 to 9</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 to 11</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 and Up</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
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</table>
Length of School Day Predicts Expulsion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Day</th>
<th>% Classrooms Expelling</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Half-Day</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Day</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended-Day</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher Depression & Job Stress Predicts Expulsion
Depression & Job Stress

• 10% screened positive for depression

• 30% screening positive for depression report elevated job stress (+1½ SD)

• 17% screening negative for depression report elevated job stress
“Today we’re going to explore in paint how we feel when we’re picked up late from preschool.”
Group Size & Teacher Stress Predict Expulsion (MA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Size &amp; Teacher Stress</th>
<th>% Classrooms Expelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Size Low Stress</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Size High Stress</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Size High Stress</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Size Low Stress</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher Job Stress Predicts Expulsion

- Low Stress: 4.9%
- Average Stress: 9.3%
- High Stress: 14.3%
For our Sanity - we've nicknamed all of our Daycare Children...

Duh! Baby Duh! Lesbo Gus Mexi Baby Chinese Kid F.J. (Fat Jee)

Dovely Butch Princess Brax Spoiled

Butter Hall Mary O'Nosie Cousin It Snot-Boy

Dandy Poops His Screamer

Little Bastard 20874345445
Listening in on a Classroom

- Houston, TX -- February 2008
Preschool Expulsion Risk Measure

1. “This child’s classroom behaviors interfere with my ability to teach effectively.”
2. “This child’s classroom behaviors interfere with my ability to maintain control of the class.”
3. “This child’s classroom behaviors interfere with the other children’s opportunity to learn.”
4. “This child’s classroom behaviors may result in someone getting hurt or property damage.”
5. “This child might do something for which I would be held responsible, reflecting poorly on my teaching skills.”
6. “Other parents complain about this child’s classroom behaviors.”
7. “This child’s classroom behaviors are not likely to improve significantly.”
8. “There is little that I or anyone else can do to significantly improve this children’s classroom behavior.”
9. “This child’s parents will not be much help in improving this child’s behavior.”
10. “My job as a teacher would be easier if this child were not in my classroom.”
11. “My job is more stressful because of this child’s behavior.”
12. “Some mornings I find myself hoping that this child will be absent from my classroom.”
7. “This child’s classroom behaviors are not likely to improve significantly.”
8. “There is little that I or anyone else can do to significantly improve this child’s behavior.”
9. “This child’s parents will not be much help in improving this child’s behavior.”

![Graph showing percentage of responses under different stress levels.]

- Low Stress: 20%
- Mod Stress: 19%
- High Stress: 44%

Legend:
- Green: Low Stress
- Blue: Mod Stress
- Red: High Stress
12. “Some mornings I find myself hoping that this child will be absent from my classroom.”
Behavioral Consultation Predicts Decreased Expulsion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Classrooms Expelling</th>
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Access to Behavioral Support Staff

The Rationale for ECMHC in CT

Connecticut

16% of Classrooms
12 Expulsions per 1,000 Enrolled
(1 in Every 81 Preschoolers)
7th Highest State in the Nation
Early Childhood Consultation Partnership

- Created in 2002 – Funded by DCF
- Availability: All CT child care & ece programs serving 0-to 5-year olds
- Referral-source: child care directors (teachers & parents)

- Services: Child/classroom-focused consultation, Teacher training, Home-based component
- Consultants: 10-20 MA-level throughout state
- Dosage: Brief (3 months), intense (6-8 hrs/wk)
- Supervision: Group, Individual, Agency-based
What ECCP is not!
Evaluated in 3 Statewide RCTs

- Study #1 (2005-2007)
  - Preschool (3-4 yo) programs in CT
- Study #2 (2008-2010, finishing)
  - Preschool (3-4 yo) programs in CT
- Study #3 (2008-2010, finishing)
  - Infant/Toddler (0-2 yo) programs in CT

- Inclusion: Requesting ECCP; Consenting
- Exclusion: Prior ECCP treatment
## Sample Sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Target Children</th>
<th>Random Peers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study 1 (P)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study 2 (P)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Study 1 (P)</th>
<th>Study 2 (P)</th>
<th>Study 3 (I/T)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher BA+</strong></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Size</strong></td>
<td>$M=16.9$</td>
<td>$M=16.8$</td>
<td>$M=9.2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Child Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Child Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other/Multi</td>
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ECCP EVALUATION LOGIC MODEL

- ECCP Consultation
- Teacher Beliefs
- Teacher-Child Interactions
- Teacher Stress/Control
- Classroom Environment
- Child Behavior
Measures (3 studies)

• Child Behavior Problems (Teachers & Parents)
  - Conners Rating Scale & Social Skills Rating System
  - ITSEA & BITSEA
  - Time Sampling (Aggression, Oppositionality, Disruptive Behavior)

• Home-School Collaboration
  - Family Involvement Questionnaire & Parent Satisfaction with Educational Experiences

• Teacher Beliefs and Feelings
  - Parental Modernity Scale
  - Child Care Worker Job Stress Inventory
  - Teacher Depression (CES-D)

• Classroom Quality & Interactions
  - ECERS-R & Arnett CIS
  - CLASS & PMHCS
Studies 2 & 3 Measures

- **Classroom Quality & Interactions**
  - Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
  - Preschool Mental Health Climate Scale (PMHCS)

- **Target Children [+Random Peers]**
  - Conners Teacher Rating Scale – Long Form (CTRS-LF) or Infant-Toddler Social Emotional Assessment (ITSEA)
  - Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) [+Random Peers] or Brief Infant-Toddler Social Emotional Assessment (BITSEA)
  - Preschool Social Behavior Scale (PSBS)
  - Preschool Expulsion Risk Measure (PERM) [+Random Peers]
  - Time Sampling (Structured Activities & Free Play)
    - (Relational Aggression, Oppositionality, Disruptive Behavior)

- **Home-School Collaboration**
  - Family Involvement Questionnaire
  - Parent Satisfaction with Educational Experiences
Studies 2 & 3 Measures (more details)

- **Time Sampling**
  - Each -- 30 segments (10 sec on, 10 sec off)
  - **Relational Aggression (Free Play)**
    - Any verbal or nonverbal behavior that (a) excluded others from play or encouraged others to exclude a child or (b) threatened to exclude or ignore.
  - **Oppositionality (Structured Activity)**
    - Includes defiance or refusal to follow adult directions, arguing with adults, and temper outbursts in response to adult directives.
  - **Disruptive Behavior (Structured Activity)**
    - Includes behaviors that are not necessarily in response to adult directions, but are either impulsive, show difficulty sustaining attention or waiting turn, disturbs other children, or displays an emotional or behavioral outburst.

- **Condition-Blinded Objective Raters**
Studies 2 & 3 Measures (more details)

- **Home-School Collaboration**
  - 11 items, 4-point Likert Scale (rarely-always)
  - Alpha = .81
  - **Example items:**
    - “The parent talks to the teacher about how the child gets along with his/her classmates at school.”
    - “The parent talks to the child’s teacher about the child’s accomplishments.”
    - “The parent talks with the child’s teacher about personal or family matters.”
  - (Family Involvement Questionnaire; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000)
Preschool Mental Health Climate Scale

• A. Transitions (7 items)
  - Transitions between activities are smooth yet unregimented.
  - During transitions, teachers provide children individual support and flexibility as needed.

• B. Directions & Rules (6 items)
  - Staff expresses clear directions and behavioral expectations and provides appropriate follow-through on instructions.
  - Rules, directions and expectations are developmentally appropriate.
Preschool Mental Health Climate Scale

- **C. Staff Awareness (3 items)**
  - Staff is aware of potential behavioral challenges before they escalate, and staff intervenes appropriately.
  - Staff physically circulates around the room.

- **D. Staff Affect (3 items)**
  - Staff seems to enjoy their job.
  - Staff is active and energetic, not lethargic.

- **E. Staff Cooperation (3 items)**
  - Staff members have distinct roles that are both complementary and flexible. They act like a team and share responsibilities well.
  - Staff members appear to enjoy each other.
Preschool Mental Health Climate Scale

- **F. Staff-Child Interactions (9 items)**
  - Staff actively listens to children with attention.
  - Staff shows positive facial affect towards children.

- **G. Teaching Feelings & Problem Solving (8 items)**
  - Staff helps children label their own feelings.
  - Staff actively promotes children’s use of language to prevent/negotiate conflicts.
Preschool Mental Health Climate Scale

- H. Individ & Dev Approp Pedagogy (6 items)
  - Staff provides children with individualized support.
  - Staff actively supports children’s play.

- I. Child Interactions (5 items)
  - Children appear to be happy and well adjusted.
  - Children interact with peers in a way that shows mutual affiliation, concern, or affection.

- Negative Indicators (9 items)
  - Staff shouts at children from across the room.
  - Staff places unrealistic demands on children’s attention span.
Study 1 Results (Target Children)

CTRS Oppositional

CTRS Hyperactivity

CTRS Restless-Impulsive

SSRS Externalizing

\( (F = 10.68^{**}; d = 0.57) \)

\( (F = 10.62^{**}; d = 0.51) \)

\( (F = 4.05^{*}; d = 0.34) \)

\( (F = 4.33^{*}; d = 0.39) \)
## Effect Sizes for Studies 1-3

### PRELIMINARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Study 1 (P)</th>
<th>Study 2 (P)</th>
<th>Study 3 (I/T)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TARGET CHILDREN</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Ratings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTRS/ITSEA</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSRS-Ext</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Observation</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Aggression</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppositionality</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disruptive Behavior</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Home-School Collaboration</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effect Sizes:</td>
<td></td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects for Studies 2 &amp; 3 are preliminary and based on incomplete data.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RANDOM PEERS</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSRS-Ext/BITSEA</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>.29</td>
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Conclusions (so far)

- Positive or Likely Positive Effects
  - Teacher-rated externalizing behaviors in targets (P & I/T)
  - Observed oppositionality & disruptive behaviors (I/T)
  - Home-School Collaboration (P & I/T)
- Null or Likely Null Effects
  - Teacher depression and job stress (Study 1 only)
  - ECERS-R, CLASS (P & I/T)
- Too Close to Call at This Time
  - Teacher-rated externalizing behaviors in random peers (P & I/T)
- Not Yet Examined
  - Preschool Mental Health Climate Scale (PMHCS)
  - Preschool Expulsion Risk Measure (PERM)
  - All parent-rated forms
NEWS ITEM: Preschoolers are more likely to be expelled. – Study

This is your fifth expulsion! If you don't stop your constant namecalling, do you know where you might end up?!!

...in Congress?
Recommendations (Policy)

- PreK programs should not expel
  - Assess needs and add supports
  - Facilitate direct/supported transfers

- All PreK teachers have regular access to behavioral consultants/ECMHC
  - Currently only 1 in 5

- All PreK child-teacher ratios 10:1
  - 16% of classes > 10:1
Recommendations (Policy)

- Supportive policies and service regarding teacher job stress
  - Reasonable hours with breaks
  - Conditions, Compensation, Supports

- Supportive services focusing on teacher job stress

- Federal/State Funds
  - Track expulsion rates (disproportionality)
  - Implement and evaluate promising models
Recommendations (Policy)

• Adopt *American Academy of Pediatrics* policy statement on K-12 expulsion & suspension
  
  - Expulsion → comprehensive assessment
  - Expulsion → referral to health care provider
  - Programs have strong relationship with community health and behavioral agencies
  - Prior to expelling, assess safety of alternative placement
Recent Directions

- New legislation and/or state policy in at least 4 states
- New or increased behavioral consultation systems in at least 6 states
- Caring for Our Children
- Follow-up studies
Work Supported by:

- Foundation for Child Development
- Pew Charitable Trusts
  National Institute for Early Education Research
- A.L. Mailman Family Foundation
- Schott Foundation for Public Education
- Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut
- Connecticut Department of Children & Families
- Connecticut Department of Education
For copies of complete reports and policy briefs

Please visit: ziglercenter.yale.edu
Child Study Center · Yale University School of Medicine

Thank You!

www.ziglercenter.yale.edu