Front Porch Series:
Preschool Expulsions and Suspensions, and Why We Should Care
February 2, 2017
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Edward Zigler Center in Child Development & Social Policy, Yale University Child Study Center

Increased Attention to Preschool Expulsion/Suspension

- Increased Federal, State, and Municipal Attention to Preschool Expulsion & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC)
  - DHHS & ED Joint Position Statement (12/10/2014)
  - ED’s OCR Data Collection
  - 2014 Reauthorization of CCDBG
  - Head Start Performance Standards

FLASHBACK
2002
• Preschool children referred for evaluations due to expulsion
  • What are the rates? Who is most vulnerable?
  • What is the relevance of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC)?
  • Curiosity; Strategy

Prekindergarteners Left Behind (Gilliam, 2005)

• 3,898 randomly selected prekindergarten lead teachers
  • All 40 states with PreK
  • 81.0% response rate
  • Wide variety of classroom settings
    • 58% public school preK
    • 29% Head Start (14% in PS, 15% not)
    • 13% Other (Profit & Nonprofit Child Care)

The Expulsion Question

• Over past 12 months
  • Required terminating participation in program
  • Behavioral problem
  • No transition to more appropriate setting
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

State PreK Expulsion Rates

[Map showing state PreK expulsion rates]
Child Care Expulsion Rates

- **Child Rates**
  - **Detroit, MI** (Grannan et al., 1999; n=127; 28%)
    - Rate = 28/1,000
  - **Massachusetts** (Silborn & Shahar, 2006; n=119; 64%)
    - Rate = 27/1,000 (30% 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**
  - **Illinois** (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)

Many Factors Predict Preschool Expulsion

- **Child-Teacher Ratio**
  - Low Stress
  - Average Stress
  - High Stress

- **Program Length of Day**
  - Half-Day
  - School-Day
  - Extended-Day

- **Teacher Job Stress**
  - No Access
  - On-Call Access
  - On-Site Access

- **Access to Behavioral Supports**
  - Low
  - Medium
  - High
Therefore...

Preschool Expulsion Is NOT a Child Behavior.

It is an Adult Decision.

Who Gets Expelled?

- 4-year-olds 50% more likely than 3's
- Black preschoolers more than 2 times as likely as white pre
- Boys more than 4 ti

The 3 B's of Expulsion Risk

- BIG
- BLACK
- BOY

http://ocrdata.ed.gov

March 2014 (2011-2012 data)
• “Black children make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of preschool children suspended more than once.”
• “Boys receive more than three out of four out-of-school preschool suspensions.”

June 2016 (2013-2014 data)
• Black preschoolers 3.6 times as likely to be suspended as white preschoolers
• Blacks represent 19% of preschoolers, but 47% of suspensions
• Boys represent 54% of preschoolers, but 78% of suspensions

So, Why Are Our Boys and Our Black Children Most at Risk?

• Potential Reasons:
  • Boys are more susceptible to stressors (Kaur et al., 2015).
  • Children of color often have more stressors.
  • Children of color often attend programs of poorer quality and fewer resources (Kaur et al., 2015).
  • Yet, these alone don’t seem to account for all of the disparities in early suspensions and expulsions.

What Else May Account?

Is it possible that implicit biases about our boys and especially our black boys may play a role?

• Black boys more likely to be suspended/expelled for similar behaviors in elementary school (Ndlo, et al., 2011)
• Biases about black boys
  • Culpable (Skiba et al., 2016; Dabbert et al., 2004; Todd et al., 2016)
  • Older (Stoff et al., 2016)
  • Less likely to feel pain (Stoff et al., 2016)
  • “Shifting Standards” (Nurber et al., 2012)
Finally, A Study of Implicit Bias in ECE

- Jan 2015 – Funding (Thanks, W.K. Kellogg Foundation!)
- Nov 2015 – Collected Data
- Sep 2016 – Released Report of Findings

Participants (N = 132; 94% Female)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center director</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teachers</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., combination of professional roles)</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center type</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith-affiliated program</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-based PreK</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For profit</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., independent school, special education)</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Race</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years working at current location</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years working in early education</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eye Tracking Procedures

Instructions: “Now you are ready to view a series of video clips lasting 6 minutes. We are interested in learning about how teachers detect challenging behavior in the classroom. Sometimes this involves seeing behavior before it becomes problematic. The video segments you are about to view are of preschoolers engaging in various activities. Some clips may or may not contain challenging behaviors. Your job is to press the enter key on the external keypad every time you see a behavior that could become a potential challenge [experimenter demonstrates]. Please press the keypad as often as needed.”
Which Child Required the Most of Your Attention?

![Image of children A, B, C, D]

Eye-Tracking Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black boy</td>
<td>0.2823 (0.0699)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black girl</td>
<td>0.2584 (0.0481)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White boy</td>
<td>0.2258 (0.0487)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White girl</td>
<td>0.2334 (0.0475)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main: \( F = 50.87, p < .001, d = 1.33 \)

Interaction: \( F = 9.36, p < .01, d = .57 \)

Vignette Procedure

- Standardized vignette, manipulated child sex and race: DeShawn, Latoya, Jake, Emily
- "Act as if this child is in your classroom"
- Background or No Background
Vignette Results

- White teachers evidence lower behavioral standards for black children, but black teachers hold black children to relatively high standards.

- Teachers' knowledge of family stressors tends to cause them to view behaviors as being less severe, but only if teacher and child race match. If racial mismatch, then opposite effect. (consistent with empathy research)

Reflections from Child Care Providers

Why Care about Disparities in Early Expulsion?
Social Justice and Civil Rights Are Often Matters of Access
“You got a little bias stuck between your teeth.”

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: 20 MA-level throughout state
- Dosage: Brief (3 months), intense (6-8 hrs/wk)
- Supervision: Group, Individual, Agency-based

Behavioral Consultation Predicts Decreased Expulsion

Still Hot Off the Press! (ECMHC as an EBT)

Results (Target Children)

Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning & Development (CHILD)

- A new observational measure of the relationships and “mental health climate” of early childhood settings.
- Measures all interactions:
  - Staff-Child
  - Child-Child
  - Staff-Staff
- Measures staff attunement to overt and subtle cues, verbal and nonverbal behaviors;
- Addresses equity and inclusion.
Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning & Development (CHILD)

- 28 items in 9 domains.
- Transitions
- Directions & Rules
- Social & Emotional Learning
- Staff Affect
- Staff Awareness
- Staff Cooperation
- Staff-Child Interactions
- Individualized & Developmentally-Appropriate Pedagogy
- Child Behaviors
- Requires about 2-3 hours of observation.

Current Classroom Quality Measures Typically...

- Under-emphasize the importance of transitions.
- Ignore opportunities during free-play, choice-time, meals, etc.
- Ignore most of the adults in the room (only focus on "lead teacher").
- Ignore issues of equity and inclusion.

Happy Groundhog Day 2017!

How many more weeks left of expelling and suspending preschoolers?
Thank you! To Read More...

http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2016/rwjf431300/subassets/rwjf431300_2

Random-Controlled Evaluation of ECMHC (Sep 2016)
http://www.jaacap.com/article/S0890‐8567(16)30283‐0/fulltext

Yale Preschool Implicit Bias Study (Sep 2016)
www.ziglercenter.yale.edu/publications/briefs.aspx

National Academy of Sciences (Oct 2016)
https://nam.edu/expulsion‐and‐suspension‐in‐early‐education‐as‐matters‐of‐social‐justice‐and‐health‐equity/

Preschool Suspension & Expulsion Timeline
www.ziglercenter.yale.edu/publications/expulsion.aspx

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