



EXPULSION PREVENTION LANDSCAPE REPORT



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES



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Executive Summary

Recent events and the global COVID-19 pandemic have magnified that racism, disparities, and marginalization continue in our society, impacting everything from health care to law enforcement to our education system – including early care and learning. It continues to expose the need for stronger inclusive supports for young children to eliminate expulsions and exclusion practices in early learning.

This report serves as a snapshot for where our state is actively making efforts to disrupt destructive pathways such as the School to Prison Pipeline as well as recommendations for actions to better expand and coordinate our efforts. By focusing on eliminating exclusionary practices that feed into the pipeline and implementing stronger inclusion practices beginning from the start in early learning, these strategies can help to provide a buffer for provider, families, and our most vulnerable population – young children.

The Expulsion Prevention Landscape Report is a joint collaboration between multiple Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) divisions, including:

- Early Learning: Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Head Start
- Eligibility and Provider Supports: Child Care Subsidy, Professional Development
- Family Support Programs: Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Trauma Informed Care
- Licensing

This was based on the “Expulsion Policy Strategy Tool,” which provides a design for a multifaceted policy approach to developing a continuum of supports for programs, families, and children. It provides policy options to promote young children’s social-emotional development and reduce the likelihood of expulsion and suspension in early learning.¹ It asks states to evaluate practices based on six key areas:

1. Clear goals and data progress monitoring
2. Fair and appropriate policies
3. Strong family partnerships
4. Universal developmental and behavioral screening
5. Highly skilled workforce
6. Access to specialized consultation

This report outlines the current actions and future goals for DCYF to eliminate expulsions in early learning and increase inclusion practices. Out of this analysis, the following recommendations were established to build a Comprehensive Expulsion Prevention System with a cross-system public and private leadership:

- A. Washington State needs a core team of DCYF programs, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and other partners and stakeholders – including parents – to establish goals and activities for state-level improvements in reducing and preventing expulsion. This requires a project/program administrator for driving implementation and monitoring progress. This role should be a permanent position with DCYF
- B. Early learning providers need a strong foundation of trauma-informed care, inclusion, and anti-bias and anti-racist practices in preparation programs and ongoing professional development. This means a stronger relation in course outcomes for Early Childhood Education (ECE) certificate programs and intentional scaffolding for pre-service and ongoing training so that early learning providers have the knowledge and skills to meet the unique needs of all children in their care.
- C. Washington State needs to establish shared definitions across agencies that include not only expulsion, but suspension and other exclusionary practices. Ensure similar language and definitions around exclusionary practices are used throughout agencies and programs.
- D. Improve the workforce data system to enable an assessment of education, training, and coaching opportunities for all early educators across settings with more accurate provider data to be disaggregated by race, language, and the like, as it pertains to reducing expulsion and suspension.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, (2017)

- E. Goals are integrated in all agencies' agendas. Identify measures/data tracking that can inform the supports used to reduce expulsion and suspension in early learning programs success. This includes annual assessment of progress to inform ongoing policy, investments, and supports.
- F. Improve policy and practice that supports expulsion prevention recommendations consistent to Trauma Informed Care Advisory Committee. Policies to include lower classroom ratios, increased reimbursement rates to support continuity in care, and supporting workforce well-being.
- G. Improve partnerships between systems and parents and caregivers. This means gathering information from parents and caregivers around needs of their children for better success and data from families around exit and expulsion reasons for when a child experiences an exclusionary practice. Establish support services to mitigate parent and provider conflict and other family dynamics through mental health consultation.
- H. Establish a pathway for support services for both families and providers affected by expulsion events. Create an infrastructure that follows the progress of the child, as well as a system that ensures any diagnosis and individual learning and behavioral plans follow the child. Determine how to increase access to the continuum of supports with layered focus on ensuring that racial, gender, and age disparities are reduced and early intervention and developmental screenings

These recommendations call for a multi-prong, joint collaboration from multiple divisions within DCYF as well as OSPI and other partners. The following describes our examination and evaluation of where we are as a state in reducing and preventing expulsion to know where we need to go.

The findings and recommendations from the DCYF Expulsion Prevention Landscape Report and Expansion of Trauma-Informed Child Care in Washington State will serve as a guide for action steps of the Trauma Informed Care and Expulsion Work in Preschool Development Grant 2.0.

Preface

In the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, our nation faces a resurgence to end systemic racism and demands justice for the blatant murder of Black and people of color by police. The world watches as the U.S. struggles with these acts of violence and the burgeoning social unrest that follows. For those living this truth, it is known that more is required than to merely demand justice. It is a clear call to dismantle practices within systems that perpetuate racism and disparities – and for us, this in part means eliminating exclusion practices in our early learning system.

COVID-19 has challenged every aspect of our lives. Still without broad access to the COVID-19 vaccine, people and communities continue not only to fight the spread of the virus, but fight to survive the subsequent and disastrous impact it has on our economy. As of June 30, 2020, nearly 33 million Americans receive unemployment benefits – about five times the peak during the Great Recession.²

It is a predictable complication that this illness has a greater impact on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes long-standing systemic health and social inequities that place people from racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of illness and death from COVID-19. Social determinants of health have historically prevented most people within these groups from having fair opportunities for economic, physical, and emotional health.³

Surviving a global pandemic and its disproportionate impacts on BIPOC communities is detrimental. Compounded with historical and multigenerational trauma, community violence, violence inflicted from institutions, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), the disparities continue to grow.

Trailblazing efforts to invest in prevention are a much needed solution that can be a path for equality.

² CNBC: Job losses remain 'enormous': Coronavirus unemployment claims are worst in history

³ CDC: Health Equity Considerations and Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups

Introduction

Invest in Trauma-Informed Early Learning Strategies and Workforce Development

Systems all over the country are exploring ways to improve outcomes for children and families. We are making a commitment to end racism and disparities that have plagued our country for hundreds of years. Washington State is committed to this effort through investing in an early learning system that is inclusive of all children and meets the diverse and varied needs of children and families. Transformation of the early care and education system to one that is trauma-informed is essential to promote the wellbeing of young children, their families and the professionals who provide early care and educational opportunities. (Shadwell, S., 2019).

Key pillars for early childhood success are the ability to have and establish long lasting nurturing relationships with caregivers and adults and to have and gain access to support services and early intervention screening. A well-prepared and well-resourced workforce rooted in evidence and strength-based strategies is equipped to meet children's unique needs and respond to their needs in nurturing and supportive ways. Yet, in addition to combating exclusionary practices in early childhood settings, we also face the reality of an ever changing workforce, where early learning professionals must make decisions based on their ability to survive and support their own families versus their passion and commitment to children in their care. Teacher preparation is an essential component of high-quality early childhood education that leads to stronger child outcomes. Unfortunately, society's support of early childhood educators does not reflect this urgency in that Washington's early childhood educators rank in the third percentile of occupational wages (below pet groomers).⁴ This often leads to high staff turnover rates, which can negatively impact the continuity of care and child outcomes.

Early Learning Expulsions

Disparities continue in the education system and are noted to begin earlier than K-12. A 2018 report published by Education Commissions of the States details evidence of racial and gender disparities as early as preschool, where black students are 3.6 times as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension as their white classmates. Additionally, while boys represent 54% of preschool enrollment, they constitute 79% of all suspended preschool children. Research indicates that a child's early educational experiences greatly influence their development and outcomes later in life, making this data particularly consequential. Similarly, students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive out-of-school suspensions as students without disabilities.

Early learning exclusionary practices are a gateway to the school to prison pipeline. These exclusionary discipline techniques experienced by African American males (e.g., detention, out of school suspension, or disciplinary alternative education placements) alienates them from the learning process by steering them from the classroom and academic attainment and toward the criminal justice system. Black students are suspended and expelled three times more than white students. Students suspended or expelled for a discretionary violation are nearly three times more likely to be in contact with the juvenile justice system the following year. (ACLU, 2020)

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Another jarring reality of inequitable outcomes and disparities that exist for many children and families are ACEs. The CDC notes that ACEs are common: 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACE, and nearly one in six reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs. Further research shows ACEs can have lasting, negative effects on health, well-being, and opportunity.⁵

Children with ACEs and neurodevelopmental differences are at increased risk of exclusionary discipline practices. In 2006, ECEAP implemented and began enforcing a no expulsion policy.

⁴ Research Summary: The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program, Heckman Equation

⁵ CDC: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences

Children whose parents, upon enrollment of their child in ECEAP, reported a history of child expulsion were:

- 2.5 times more likely to have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)
- 2.6 times more likely to have experienced household domestic violence
- 2.7 times more likely to have a family member with substance abuse issues
- 2.8 times more likely to have a parent with mental illness
- 3.0 times more likely to have experienced Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement⁶

We must acknowledge that these injustices put upon children and communities of color are not isolated and separate. By disrupting these pathways, we are choosing to dismantle the systems and build a new system where such things as ACEs and trauma are not the predictors of a child's future.

Purpose: The Preschool Development Grant

The Initial 2018 Preschool Development Grant Birth Through 5 (PDG B-5) was a 12-month grant cycle. As part of the PDG grant application, Washington State's overarching long-term early learning outcomes are to:

1. Achieve a 90% statewide school-readiness rate
2. Eliminate race and income as predictors of school readiness

With currently just 47% of Washington's children meeting readiness standards when they enter kindergarten, (Bohanon, K., 2018) this proposal lays the foundation to build upon our state's unparalleled high-quality early learning mixed-delivery system to achieve these goals. Centered on values of racial equity and inclusion, DCYF will lead a broad coalition of early learning partners and stakeholders to more effectively serve all children birth to 5, with a focus on those children furthest from opportunity, families who are low income and/or living in poverty, children of color, children experiencing homelessness, children with disabilities, children who have experienced trauma, and children and families from rural communities. (Bohanon, K., 2018)

The five key activities conducted:

1. Needs Assessment
2. Strategic Plan
3. Maximize Parent Knowledge and Choice
4. Sharing Best Practices
5. Overall Quality

The DCYF Expulsion Prevention Landscape Report (EPLR) is an action item identified in activity four, which states:

DCYF will establish a workgroup to develop an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) strategy and create a plan for integrating trauma-informed care and expulsion prevention into provider training. DCYF will establish a trauma-informed care advisory committee and subcommittees to select trauma informed care training models, conduct community partner meetings to obtain specific feedback on potential models, and develop expulsion tracking policies and prevention strategies. (Bohanon, K., 2018)

This report is in an extension of the "Expansion of Trauma-Informed Child Care in Washington State," which described recommendations from the Trauma-Informed Care Advisory Group formed by Engrossed House Bill 2861.

Program Findings and Goals

Licensing Division

To better understand the scope of early learning childhood suspension and expulsion in Washington, the Trauma Informed Care Advisory Group recommended tracking all exclusionary provider practices, including suspension and expulsion. The advisory group recommended that DCYF create a statewide suspension and expulsion data collection

⁶ 2015-2018 SY ECEAP risk factor data, Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)

system disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, geographic location, program or provider type, and various facility characteristics. (Shadwell, S., 2019)

The DCYF Licensing Division (LD) has tracked expulsion reports in early learning child care facilities since the updated Washington Administrative Code (WAC) in 2018 (see Appendix 1). What LD has captured in data confirms our knowledge and data on a national scale which is children – predominantly children of color and male – are expelled from early learning programs at a disproportionately higher rate.

Washington’s area of strengths includes a definition for expulsion and guidance around expulsion policy. This requires early childhood education providers to develop an expulsion policy that outlines the specific safety concerns that they have communicated to parents that will result in expulsion as well as documenting and communicating the steps they took to address issues before they resorted to expulsion. Additionally, they are required to provide the parents or guardians with community-based resources that may benefit the expelled child. Providers are not penalized for reporting expulsions. WAC also has clear guidance around discipline practices and prohibited practices in child care settings (see Appendix 2).

Action Items

LD is currently in the process of determining a means for obtaining information from families that are affected by expulsion and require data to be disaggregated by race, gender, age, and the child’s first language based on parents reporting as well as the provider.

LD has plans to edit the Expulsion Report Form to capture other pertinent information about the child including: child’s placement, involvement with the child welfare system, IEP/IFSP, and medical conditions/diagnosis.

LD will coordinate efforts to collect data from the data systems that serve all early learning childhood programs to enhance tracking progress, reduce duplication, and so forth.

LD will collect and disseminate information regarding expulsion prevention plans to parents, providers, and the general public in multiple languages and modes. These would include an added emphasis that providers will not be penalized for reporting expulsions.

Professional Development

Research demonstrates a strong relationship between effective classroom practices and educational preparation.⁷ The relationships between young children and their teachers are the cornerstone of such learning. Early childhood educators who are prepared on par with K-12 teacher standards are more effective in promoting school readiness and other positive outcomes. (Abrams, A., 2019)

The Professional Development work at DCYF recognizes this in our efforts for innovative workforce strategies and supports. Strong, quality data allows us to make informed decisions and identify targeted needs for early learning professionals. DCYF’s workforce registry includes data on all early learning professionals, including licensed child care and state-funded pre-k that includes personal and demographic information and education and training accomplishments. This allows us to analyze these accomplishments in a variety of ways to understand needs and identify supports. In addition, the registry holds all training delivery data for early learning providers to identify strengths and needs in the type of training that is available throughout our state.

Compensation data, evaluation, and policy recommendations are a focus for Washington State and includes leadership from DCYF in efforts to affect change for early learning providers. Washington State Legislature passed **Child Care Access Now Act (HB 1344)**, investing in establishing joint convening of DCYF and the Department of Commerce to convene and facilitate a child care collaborative task force to further develop policy recommendations first established by a compensation technical workgroup. **The Compensation Technical Workgroup published a report** that identifies

⁷ M (2014) Building a Skilled Teacher Workforce, Shared and Divergent Challenges in Early Care and Education and in Grades K-12. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

compensation levels for K-12 Parity for early learning professionals. As an additional support, DCYF has an established substitute pool for early learning professionals to work on quality improvement goals, training, and education.

In August 2019, updated licensing rules went in to effect that included updates and increases in education and training requirements for all licensed providers. DCYF ECEAP has requirements for education and training in the Professional Development, Training, and Requirements (PDTR) Standards for all job roles in ECEAP. Education requirements are the Washington State ECE stackable certificates:

- Initial Certificate (12 credits)
- Short Certificate (20 credits)
- State Certificate (47 credits)

These certificates include a strong foundation of content related to social-emotional learning, including a three-credit course on guiding behavior. The licensing rule update includes a timeline and multiple pathways, named “equivalents,” to achieve the education. One solution to expand these pathways is developing a community-based model to be more accessible to professionals. In 2020, Washington State Legislature passed HB 2556 to develop this model and make it available July 2021. Multiple pathways create more accessible solutions and responds to the diverse needs of early learning professionals throughout the state.

In addition to education, the training requirements includes core content for social-emotional learning (SEL). This was developed to intentionally build a foundation in understanding and responding to children’s needs:

- Initial training, Child Care Basics, includes 12 of 30 hours focused on the SEL topics
- Continuing training, Enhancing Quality Early Learning, builds on initial with all 20 hours focused on these SEL topics and brain development
- Ongoing training includes an emphasis on cycle of learning for adults with reflection and planning for application to practice

Washington State, in partnership between OSPI and DCYF with other community partners, is engaged in Technical Assistance with the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) to develop a plan for statewide implementation of pyramid model practices using implementation science.

DCYF is developing training and education content related to social emotional learning, trauma-informed care, and anti-racist and anti-bias practices with other state partners and stakeholders

DCYF Professional Development recognizes the impact possible when coaches receive training aligned with early learning professionals to deepen the learning and support direct application to change in practice. This occurs as a strategy and specific policy could be developed to further implement. This process ensures coaches have the same professional learning content aligned with providers’ professional development. An example will be the Pyramid Model training for all coaches.

Action Items

Expansion of the statewide Pyramid Model implementation will require additional resources to achieve. DCYF and OSPI are committed to establishing these resources and continuing in partnership to have statewide implementation.

DCYF is in the process of planning coach training on Pyramid Model practices that will be delivered to all Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) coaches in 2021. This effort is in partnership with OSPI and includes updating Pyramid Model training to incorporate more about trauma-informed care, inclusion, and anti-bias and anti-racist practices.

DCYF continues to expand on pathways for staff qualifications that are responsive to diverse needs of workforce and preparation for serving children and families who also have diverse needs.

Long-Term Goal: work with higher education to influence and update course outcomes in relation to inclusion, trauma-informed care, and equity as expulsion prevention strategies.

ECEAP

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is Washington's pre-kindergarten program that prepares 3- and 4-year-old children from families furthest from opportunity for success in school and in life. DCYF oversees the program.

Since 1985, ECEAP has focused on the well-being of the whole child by providing comprehensive services to Washington's most at-risk young children. The program is aligned with nationally researched programs that have shown exceptional returns on investment. ECEAP services include:

- Increase social-emotional, physical, and pre-academic skills
- Ensure each child receives medical and dental screenings so each child can fully focus on learning
- Help families move toward self-sufficiency and builds their capacity to support their children's success

During the 2019-20 school year, ECEAP served 14,000 children at more than 390 locations across Washington. DCYF administers ECEAP through 54 contracts with school districts, educational service districts, community colleges, local governments, tribal organizations, child care centers and homes, and non-profits.

Early Learning Professional Supports

All ECEAP programs must participate in Early Achievers, the state QRIS. Programs are required to have a practice-based coach trained in Early Achievers. These coaches can be contracted through Child Care Aware (CCA) or hired as staff in the program. Coaches must be practice based and trained in Early Achievers Coach Framework.

ECEAP has a robust system of support services. Contractors are required to have an IECMHC. This person can be a contracted mental health professional or employed by the ECEAP contractor. ECEAP Performance Standards give contractors guidance on qualifications for IECMHCs and expectations around their role. Programs must have access to an IECMHC who can be available to observe classrooms and children, work with parents to address their child's mental health issues, consult with staff regarding interventions for children, and refer children and families to local mental health services.

DCYF ECEAP provides guidance to contractors regarding access to positive behavior and supports for challenging behaviors.

Programmatic Policies of ECEAP

ECEAP contractors are required to use a research-based curriculum. ECEAP identified Creative Curriculum and High Scope as the two state-approved curricula. Other alternative curricula must be approved by DCYF ECEAP before it can be used. Creative Curriculum has social-emotional curricula embedded. Many ECEAP Contractors also use a layering of social-emotional curricula in addition to their foundational curricula. Social-emotional curricula currently used by ECEAP contractors include:

- 5-2-1-0 Let's Go
- Center of the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) – Pyramid
- Conscious Discipline
- Flip It
- Healthy Relationships
- Incredible Years
- Kindness Curriculum
- Montessori Grace and Courtesy
- My Plate
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)
- Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS)
- RULER Approach to Social Emotional Learning
- Sanford Harmony
- Second Step
- Talking About Touching
- Toddlers to Teens

ECEAP contractors are required to have an expulsion policy. ECEAP contractors must share these policies in written form to the parent. ECEAP provides an overview of expulsion that includes ECEAP's commitment to racial equity and how expulsion disproportionately impacts children of color. ECEAP also outlines steps to ensure equitable access to ECEAP programming and guidance for additional support.

Continuity of Care

DCYF requires contractors to work with local agencies to recruit age-eligible children. Contractors must focus their recruitment from the child welfare system, including foster care, kinship care, CPS, Family Assessment Response (FAR) or Indian Child Welfare (ICW), children with developmental delays or disabilities, and children experiencing homelessness as defined by the federal McKinney-Veto Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance.

Children must be at least 3 years old by Aug. 31 of the school year and are not age-eligible for kindergarten, family income is at or below 110% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) **or** the child has an IEP **or** the family is experiencing homelessness (can exceed the 110% FPL).

Children can be eligible for Working Day ECEAP if parents meet the approved WorkFirst activities.

Screenings in Early Learning Programs

DCYF ECEAP requires contractors to provide developmental screenings for all children enrolled. Children must be screened within 45 calendar days of a child's first day in class. Contractors may choose what tool they use. The tool must be valid, reliable, and sensitive to the cultural and linguistic needs of children and families. If a child was screened by their medical provider within the last six months, the program can use that screen to meet requirements. Contractors can only conduct the screening with parent consent and in the child's home language when possible.

Additionally, children are assessed quarterly. Screenings are shared and discussed with the family at home visits and conferences.

Action Items

While ECEAP does have a no-expulsion policy, ECEAP is in the process of enhancing the "exit reasons" section in the Early Learning Management System (ELMS) to collect additional information as to why children are exited out of ECEAP. This updated section asks contractors why the child is being exited and what resources and strategies that were used to keep this child enrolled in ECEAP. This will also help to identify if "soft expulsion" practices are being used, if parents are having to choose between Special Education services, and if the child had any behavior challenges associated with their disenrollment.

In addition, DCYF ECEAP and ECEAP contractors will be able to pull an expulsion report that can inform trends to support strategies and training for staff. This report can be disaggregated by race and site to recognize the disproportionate effects of bias on children in the classroom.

Early Achievers

Early Achievers, Washington State's QRIS, provides a framework for increasing and recognizing observable quality in ECE settings. Early Achievers is designed to:

- Increase the quality and quantity of high-quality early care and education for young children prior to kindergarten entry
- Engage and support ECE providers in their continuous quality improvement with relationship based professional development
- Provide families with young children information about ECE program quality through an easy to understand rating system
- Recognize quality improvement efforts with monetary awards, tiered reimbursement, scholarships, grants, and other resources
- Listen and learn from community partners as Early Achievers continues to adapt and participate in continuous quality improvement of the QRIS

Policy and Data

Early Achievers participants are able to demonstrate quality in the standard area of expulsion. The revised standard aligns with the licensing rules related to expulsion. Early learning providers receive points for expanding the required expulsion policy to include prevention strategies such as how the program will support children with challenging

behavior and developmental needs through family partnership, staff training and IECMH consultation or coaching. ECE providers are awarded points for each of these elements of the policy. This allows early learning providers to engage in continuous quality improvement through relationship based professional development. When implementing an expanded policy, it may include the following elements:

- Description of how staff work with families to establish and implement a behavior support plan for children with persistent challenging behaviors
- Description of training for staff to support positive social and emotional development, reducing challenging behaviors, and trauma-informed care on an annual basis
- Description of plans to access consultation for behavioral or developmental concerns through a mental health consultant, coach, or other professional

The Early Achievers data system tracks how many programs opt in to the expulsion standard, as well as which programs receive mental health consultation and expulsion prevention coaching. MERIT tracks the availability of community-based training related to promoting social-emotional development, behavior challenges, and classroom climate. MERIT tracks how many trainings are delivered on social-emotional supports and coaching. COMPASS tracks compliance with discipline violations. Guidance policies in the new WAC are clear and include two-way communication with parents.

Relationship-Based Professional Development (RBPDP)

Early Achievers offers coaching supports and training to support early learning professionals that are challenged by behaviors in the classroom. Specialized coaches have received training and endorsement in the following social-emotional frameworks:

- ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE Developmental Screening
- Beyond Behaviors
- Filming Interactions to Nurture Development
- Flip It
- Haring Center Internships
- Incredible Years
- Pyramid Model

Family Partnerships

Early Achievers has an opt-in standard for family partnerships that allows early learning providers to demonstrate quality aligning with child care licensing rules. This includes providing support for families and documenting this on the family engagement action plan template based on Strengthening Families or equivalent self-assessment.

Goals are documented on the family engagement action plan and updated annually. The family engagement action plan must show the dates of creation and each annual review.

Action Items

Updated Early Achievers standards were released internally and to partners, but are not yet implemented in the field. The timeline for implementation is dependent on the completion of the data system, COMPASS, which is used for data collection. Training for RBPDP staff related to social-emotional supports, anti-bias, and expulsion prevention is ongoing.

Head Start

Head Start promotes the school readiness of young children from low income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Head Start programs support the comprehensive development of children from prenatal to age 5, in centers, child care partner locations, and in their own homes, in a variety of ways.

The Head Start Program Performance Standards (1302.17) provide clear policy regarding limitations on suspension and prohibition on expulsion. A program cannot expel or un-enroll a child from Head Start because of a child's behavior.

Head Start funds early learning programs to hire family services staff and mental health consultants. Head Start offers tools that help programs understand and measure their progress in building strong partnerships with families. The Office

of Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework provides key areas of focus for Head Start programs. Training and technical assistance are provided to strengthen family partnerships. This is a strong component of Head Start programs. The Head Start Program Performance Standards require that a program must ensure all mental health consultants are licensed or certified mental health professionals. A program must use mental health consultants with knowledge of and experience in serving young children and their families, if available in the community.

Developmental screenings must be conducted within 45 days of enrollment. Screenings are conducted by trained Head Start staff and include parent involvement.

Head Start works closely with IDEA Part C and Part B providers to develop and refer for appropriate services with developmental delays. Head Start promote linkages between prevention and intervention services: coordinate care through medical homes. Head Start provides health and early childhood mental health consultation to early learning programs. The Office of Head Start requires and funds mental health consultants in each program. This is an area of focus for the Head Start Collaboration Office. Training and technical assistance is provided from the Office of Head Start.

Each Head Start program is required to implement an evidence-based coaching model. Coaches support teachers and home visitors in providing high quality services.

Head Start provide early childhood mental health consultation to programs to enhance teacher-child interactions, improve the quality of classroom climate, increase children's social skills, and prevent expulsion. Head Start is building strong partnerships with families. Head Start is creating program-level discipline practices for all staff and ensuring that discipline policies comply with federal civil rights laws.

Action Items

Head Start Collaboration Office is working closely with IECMHC professional development and support to develop specific training and support for mental health consultants in Head Start.

Head Start Collaboration Office is creating strategies to increase referrals from Head Start programs to mental health treatment services through behavioral health systems.

Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC)

The Expansion of Trauma-Informed Care Child Care in Washington State Report (2019) highlights key benefits of Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) both on a national and state level. IECMHC is a prevention-oriented, relationship-based approach focused on strengthening the capacity of staff, families, programs, and systems to promote positive social and emotional development. IECMHC has a growing evidence base which demonstrates positive impacts on child, staff, and program-level outcomes. These include, but are not limited to:

- Improved teacher-child interactions and classroom emotional climate
- Increased teacher sensitivity, efficacy, and confidence
- Reductions in children's challenging behavior and increases in social skills
- Reduced child expulsion rates, including among young children of color
- Less work missed by families and lower parenting stress
- Decreases in teachers' stress and turnover rates (Hepburn, Perry, Shivers & Gilliam, 2013)

This strategy supports our national and state investments in child care, early learning, and quality improvement efforts.

Washington State is developing an IECMHC system and has established a Trauma-Informed Care Advisory Group to expand services and improve providers' responses to vulnerable children (Bohanon, K., 2018).

In Washington State, IECMHC has been available most broadly to ECE providers across many state-level programs and initiatives including Head Start, ECEAP, ECLIPSE, and Early Achievers. Head Start grantees and ECEAP contractors are required to access IECMHC. Consultation is integrated into various performance standards, which outline the role, responsibilities, and qualifications of consultants. IECMHC consultants are embedded in therapeutic child care programs such as ECLIPSE. IECMHC is also provided through local programs and initiatives such as Best Starts for Kids Child Care

Health Consultation (King County) and Project LAUNCH (Cowlitz and Grays Harbor Counties). Although the current state investment is focused on IECMHC in early care and education, it isn't confined to these settings. Small pockets of IECMHC exist within other early childhood systems such as child welfare and home visiting. Despite many pockets of valuable IECMHC work across the state, the majority of ECE providers don't have adequate access to integrated, high-quality mental health consultation. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated need for these services and highlighted their lack of availability adequate to meet demand.

Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development

The Center of Excellence for Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation provides guidance related to the competencies and qualifications of IECMHC consultants. These professionals should have specialized knowledge in early childhood development, attachment, the effects of stress and trauma on children and families, and the impacts of adult mental health on young children's development. Because of the nature of this work, it is important that consultants are experienced mental health professionals with deep understanding of both typical early childhood development and developmental psychopathology so that they can determine whether programmatic and classroom-based interventions alone will be adequate or if a referral to more intensive services is needed. As such, the Center of Excellence recommends that consultants be licensed or license-eligible mental health professionals, especially if they are working independently. Head Start and ECEAP requirements for IECMHC consultants align with this recommendation; however, these requirements are not consistent in all IECMHC programs across the state. Due to lack of a statewide model of IECMHC, clear guidance for providers and consultants regarding qualifications is not yet available. Additionally, there is no mechanism in place to support providers in accessing qualified consultants.

Through the federal PDG B-5, a survey of IECMHC consultants across all programs in the state was conducted. The survey data indicates that IECMHC consultants are not adequately representative of ECE providers and families. White, female, and monolingual English speaking IECMHC consultants are overrepresented in comparison to the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the teachers and families they are supporting. This finding is consistent with prior behavioral health workforce studies that indicate an overall lack of workforce and leadership diversity in the behavioral health field.

Action Items

DCYF needs to build an infrastructure of system supports to ensure integration of IECMHC programs and providers into a coordinated, accessible, responsive, and outcomes-driven system that can then be more effectively scaled up over time. Because there are so many different programs with different funding streams and approaches, central administration would result in more effective evaluation for this work in a similar manner to home visiting. Additionally, we are exploring the possibility of integrating IECMHC referral into the Help Me Grow system. With this infrastructure in place, we will be better prepared to effectively scale up this work to ensure access for all ECE providers and, eventually, professionals across other early childhood systems as well.

In the absence of resources to conduct comprehensive, in-depth strategic planning for IECMHC statewide, we are grateful for the work that has been done in King County through Best Starts for Kids to develop a plan for Child Care Health Consultation, which is an umbrella term for multidisciplinary teams of consultants including nurse consultants and IECMHC consultants. They have conducted intensive and intentional stakeholder engagement to ensure that the needs and perspectives of marginalized communities are represented throughout the process. They recently finalized a road map for the future of this work which contains recommendations for next steps. Their recommendations and the vision laid out in these materials are closely aligned with the vision of the DCYF Health Team for the future of this work, and we intend to continue to collaborate to identify ways of building on the work they have completed.

Following up on what we learned through the survey of consultants, we will provide workforce development opportunities for the existing workforce and identify strategies for diversifying the consultant workforce to ensure that it is representative of the providers and families being served. We will offer opportunities for consultants to participate in communities of practice in order to share resources and create connections. We will also offer more formal professional development opportunities to increase the competencies of the workforce.

All of these action steps require an investment of resources. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unfilled IECMHC position at DCYF. An immediate need is identification of resources both in the form of staff FTEs to support strategic planning and workforce development efforts as well as adequate, stable funding to strengthen and expand this work.

Child Care Subsidy

The cost of child care is often a large financial burden for families. Washington State is working toward more equitable solutions to make child care available and affordable to many families to ensure continuity of care and equitable learning opportunities for early education.

Washington State Child Care Subsidy follows all Child Care Development Fund requirements and expands eligibility beyond requirements in many areas.

DCYF Child Care Subsidy:

- Sets the income eligibility threshold no lower than 200% FPL
- Families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are eligible for subsidy to support their individual responsibility plan
- Sets a 12-month child care eligibility period allowing for job search during gaps of employment
- Allows for temporary income fluctuations during the certification period
- Bases a family's eligibility on the family circumstances and is not linked to other programs

DCYF family income policies:

- Allow for other means to verify employment if employer refuses
- Eliminate child support cooperation provisions
- Base income eligibility for teen parents based on only teen's family income (excluding the teen parents' income)
- Provides \$15 copays for families with the lowest income
- Waives copays for families eligible for the Homeless Grace Period
- Provides provider payment when a child is absent

In terms of provider support, Washington Child Care Subsidy is ensuring that providers are paid within a reasonable timeframe. Base rates and tiered reimbursement for programs determine actual costs for special populations of children and provide tiered rates or rate add-ons; for example, children with special needs and infants and toddlers. Washington is determining actual costs for programs meeting higher quality standards; for example, higher QRIS ratings.

Action Items

Washington Child Care Subsidy is working toward several actions making child care more equitable and accessible and improving expulsion rates. These include:

- Aligning subsidy payment processes with the private market by implementing monthly rates
- Basing hours of child care authorization on parent activity and child need
- Exploring ways to delink parent work hours from child's attendance hours to consider the development needs of the child
- Exploring allowing job search as an approved activity at application

Conclusion

Systemic change and progression do not happen overnight. We know that change requires investment, multi-faceted systems, partnership, trust, and transparency.

This report serves not only a landscape for where Washington State currently lies in its expulsion prevention efforts, but also serves for an opportunity to organize and see through actual deliverable outcomes. During the early stages of information gathering for this report, all stakeholders and contributors involved were actively looking at opportunities

and gaps to partner with one another to determine actionable plans to respond to the ongoing need and meet the agency’s goals for inclusion and positive outcomes for all children.

One of the key recommendations that each program unanimously stated is Washington State does not have governance around expulsion prevention. This happens not with DCYF alone, but in collaboration with OSPI to align systems to affect change that dismantles the inequities described in this report.

And other partners, too – and parents.

Specifically, a joint collaborative and comprehensive core team of agency representatives and members. On Sept. 24, 2020, our internal agency representatives, both leadership and contributors to this report, convened forming the DCYF Expulsion Prevention Team. While the team is in early stages of future planning, it was a combined effort and DCYF can continue using this report as a guide.

A cornerstone for this work that also was evident throughout this report is workforce development and compensation. Children’s needs are met and inclusive practices and policies are implemented when the professionals working in early learning have the knowledge and skills to be responsive and make trauma-informed decisions.

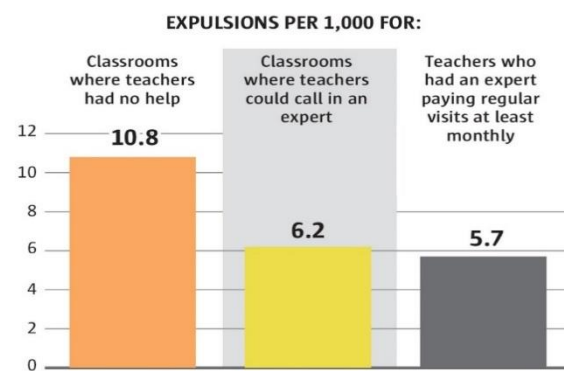
Support services for early learning providers have positive outcomes. Walter Gilliam (2005) conducted his national research more than a decade ago that showed with regular mental health consultation and coaching, teachers were half as likely to expel a child when compared to a teacher with no help.

Ongoing learning with coaching strengthens this and creates an infrastructure with a cycle of learning that leads to changes and improvements in practice – that ultimately leads to better outcomes for children. Early learning professionals stay in this work when they are well-supported and feel a sense of value. This includes ongoing coaching and professional learning, working toward fair and livable wages and compensation, and opportunity for professional advancement.

This report will serve as a guide in shaping the next steps for Washington State’s efforts toward eliminating the existing disparities in early learning. This report has disclosed multiple ways in which DCYF early learning agency leaders can partner and leverage opportunities to pioneer this work forward. Continued investment is necessary for this work to be done well. We must disrupt pathways that create large gaps for children and families to prosper. We must dismantle and rebuild systems that are ineffective. We must also strengthen and invest in the ones that are actively doing the work well.

Coaching lowers expulsion rate

A 2005 national study showed that preschool teachers with access to a mental-health coach were less likely to have expelled a child in the past 12 months than teachers who did not. And teachers who had coaches visiting on a regular basis were half as likely to expel preschoolers as teachers who had no help.



Source: Walter Gilliam

GARLAND POTTS / THE SEATTLE TIMES

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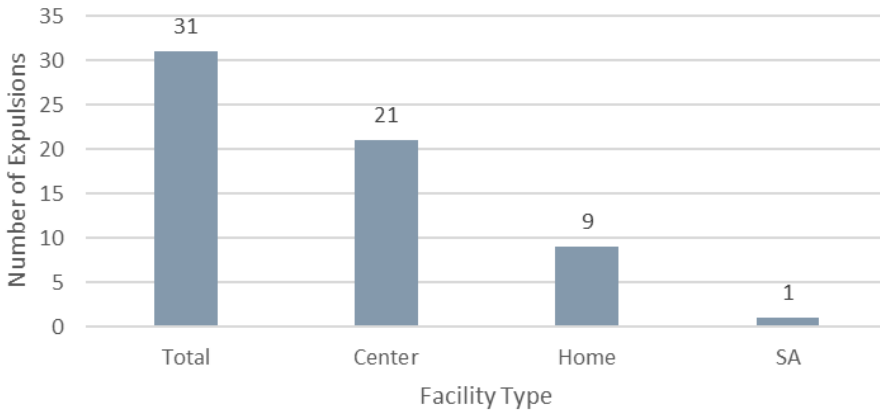
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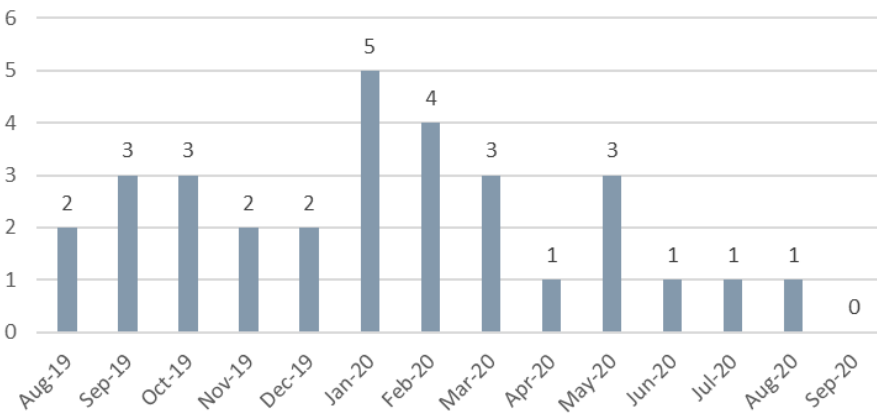
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Appendix 1

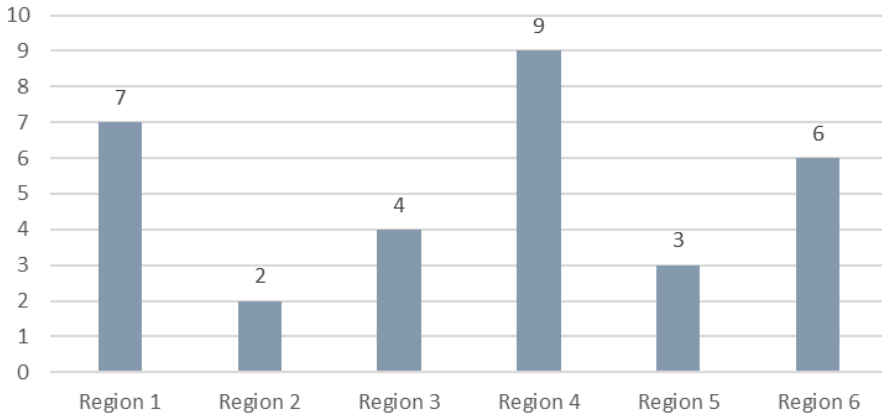
Graph 1: Expulsions Received, August 2019 - Present



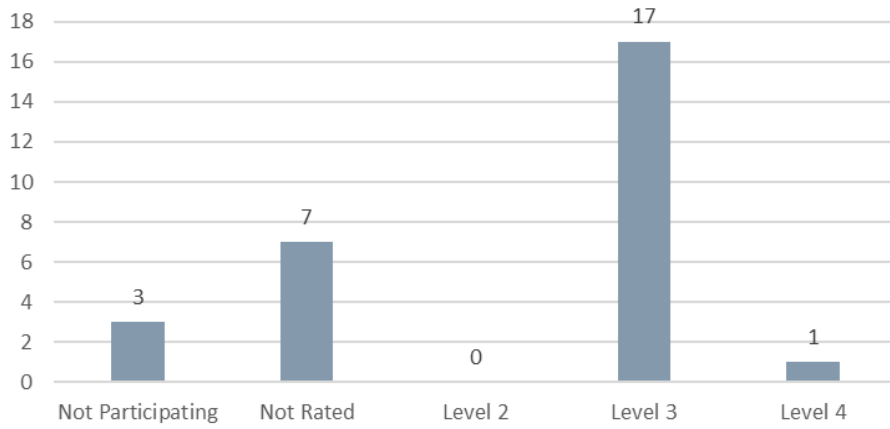
Graph 2: Expulsions by Month, August 2019 - Present



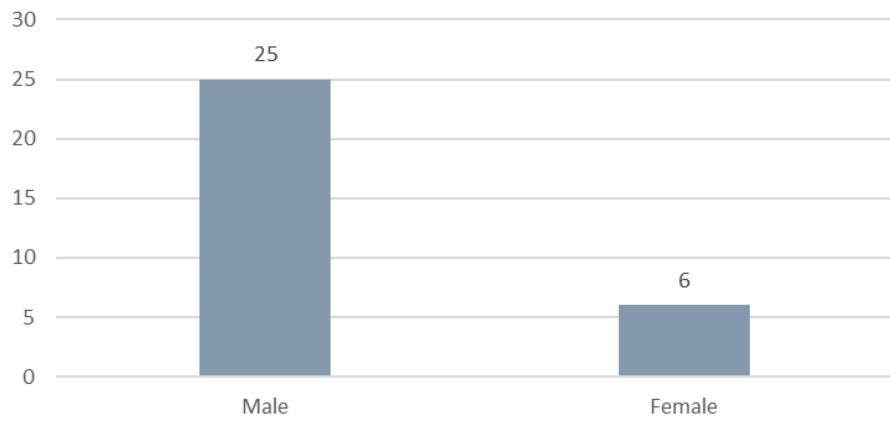
Graph 3: Expulsions by Region, August 2019 - Present



Graph 4: Expulsions by Early Achievers Rating, August 2019 – Present



Graph 5: Expulsions by Gender, August 2019 - Present



Appendix 2

WAC 110-300-0340

Expulsion.

- (1) To promote consistent care and maximize opportunities for child development and learning, an early learning provider must develop and follow expulsion policies and practices, pursuant to WAC **110-300-0486**.
- (2) An early learning provider may expel a child only if:
 - (a) The child exhibits behavior that presents a serious safety concern for that child or others; and
 - (b) The program is not able to reduce or eliminate the safety concern through reasonable modifications.
- (3) If a child is expelled, an early learning provider must:
 - (a) Review the program's expulsion policy with the parent or guardian of the child;
 - (b) Provide a record to the parent or guardian about the expulsion and the steps that were taken to avoid expulsion. The record must include the date, time, early learning program staff involved, and details of each incident that led to expulsion; and
 - (c) Provide information to the parent or guardian of the child that includes, but is not limited to, community-based resources that may benefit the child.
- (4) The early learning provider must report to the department when children are expelled. The information must include:
 - (a) Child demographic data including, but not limited to, the age, race, ethnicity, and gender of the child;
 - (b) The reason the child was expelled; and
 - (c) The resources that were provided to the parent or guardian of the child.

Expulsion policy.

- (1) An early learning provider must have and follow an expulsion policy, pursuant to WAC **110-300-0340**.
- (2) An expulsion policy must:
 - (a) Provide examples of behavior that could lead to expulsion from the early learning program;
 - (b) Detail steps the provider takes to avoid expelling a child including, but not limited to, environmental and staffing changes;
 - (c) Detail how the provider communicates to the parent or guardian of a child the steps taken under (b) of this subsection; and
 - (d) Include information that may benefit an expelled child including, but not limited to, community based resources.

WAC 110-300-0331

Prohibited behavior, discipline, and physical removal of children.

- (1) An early learning provider must take steps to prevent and, once aware of, must not tolerate:
 - (a) Profanity, obscene language, "put downs," or cultural or racial slurs;
 - (b) Angry or hostile interactions;
 - (c) Threats of physical harm or inappropriate discipline such as, but not limited to, spanking, biting, jerking, kicking, hitting, slapping, grabbing, shaking, pulling hair, pushing, shoving, throwing a child, or inflicting pain or humiliation as a punishment;
 - (d) Intimidation, gestures, or verbal abuse including sarcasm, name calling, shaming, humiliation, teasing, derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family;
 - (e) Emotional abuse including victimizing, bullying, rejecting, terrorizing, extensive ignoring, or corrupting a child;
 - (f) Prevent a child from or punish a child for exercising religious rights; or
 - (g) Anyone to:
 - (i) Restrict a child's breathing;
 - (ii) Bind or restrict a child's movement unless permitted under WAC **110-300-0335**;

- (iii) Tape a child's nose, mouth, or other body part;
- (iv) Deprive a child of sleep, food, clothing, shelter, physical activity, first aid, or regular or emergency medical or dental care;
- (v) Force a child to ingest something as punishment such as hot sauce or soap;
- (vi) Interfere with a child's ability to take care of his or her own hygiene and toileting needs;
- (vii) Use toilet learning or training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child;
- (viii) Withhold hygiene care, toileting care, or diaper changing from any child unable to provide such care for himself or herself;
- (ix) Expose a child to extreme temperatures as punishment;
- (x) Demand excessive physical exercise or strenuous postures. Excessive physical exercise includes, but is not limited to, running laps around the yard until overly tired, an extensive number of push-ups, having a child rest more than the child's development requires, standing on one foot for an uncomfortable amount of time, or holding out one's arms until tired or painful;
- (xi) Place the separated child in a closet, bathroom, locked room, outside, or in an unlicensed space; and
- (xii) Use high chairs, car seats, or other confining space or equipment to punish a child or restrict movement.

(2) An early learning provider must supervise to protect children from the harmful acts of other children. A provider must immediately intervene when they become aware that a child or children are teasing, fighting, bullying, intimidating, or becoming physically aggressive.

(3) An early learning provider may separate a preschool age or school age child from other children when that child needs to regain control of him or herself.

(a) During separation time, the child must remain under the appropriate level of supervision of a licensee, center director, assistant director, program supervisor, lead teacher or an assistant teacher.

(b) Separation time should be minimized and appropriate to the needs of the individual child.

(4) If a child is separated from other children, an early learning provider must:

(a) Consider the child's developmental level, language skills, individual and special needs, and ability to understand the consequences of his or her actions; and

(b) Communicate to the child the reason for being separated from the other children.

(5) If an early learning provider follows all strategies in this section, and a child continues to behave in an unsafe manner, only a licensee, center director, assistant director, program supervisor, lead teacher, or an assistant teacher may physically remove the child to a less stimulating environment. Staff must remain calm and use a calm voice when directing or removing the child. Physical removal of a child is determined by that child's ability to walk:

(a) If the child is willing and able to walk, staff may hold the child's hand and walk him or her away from the situation.

(b) If the child is not willing or able to walk, staff may pick the child up and remove him or her to a quiet place where the child cannot hurt themselves or others.

Appendix 3

Report of Expelled Child

If an early learning provider expels a child, the provider must review the expulsion policy with the child’s parent/guardian, and provide a record to the child’s parent/guardian that details the incident(s) leading up to and the steps taken to avoid the expulsion. The provider must also report the expulsion to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). WAC 110-300-0340.

This form includes information that is required to be reported to an expelled child’s parent or guardian and to DCYF. **However, prior to sending the form to DCYF, names of the child(ren) must be removed or blanked out.**

Name of Expelled Child:

Date Child Started Attending Program:

Date Child is Expelled:

Early Learning Program Information		
Facility/Provider Name		Provider ID #
Address	City	Zip Code
Email	Telephone	Fax
Name of Person Filling Out this Form:		
Reason for Expulsion		
This child is expelled because:		
Incidents that Led to the Decision to Expel Child		
Date:	Time:	Staff Involved: Incident That Occurred:

Steps Taken to Prevent the Expulsion of Child		
<p>Prior to this decision to expel, the following actions were taken to avoid expelling the child:</p> 		
Resources Provided to Child's Parent or Guardian		
<p>The following information was provided to the child's parent/guardian as a resource that may benefit the child (including, but not limited to, community-based resources):</p> 		
Demographic Information About Expelled Child To Report To DCYF		
Child's Gender:	Child's Age:	Child's Residence Zip Code:
If Known, Child's Race:		
If Known, Child's Ethnicity:		
If Known, Primary Language Spoken in Child's Home:		

Signature of Early Learning Provider	Date	Signature of Child's Parent/Guardian	Date
<i>Signatures are not required on form submitted to DCYF</i>			