

Preventing Expulsion and Suspension: Keeping Children In Child Care Settings

What Early Care and Education Providers Need to Know

Definition

A child's experience in their early years provides the foundation for future success in school and life. Eliminating suspension and expulsion in early childhood programs ensure that families and educators work together to implement meaningful prevention and intervention strategies.

Expulsion is a discipline practice that ends the child's enrollment in the program. **Suspension** is defined by any of the following practices:

- reducing the time a child attends a program.
- restricting a child's attendance for a determined period of time.
- requiring that a parent or family member accompany the child in the program.
- requiring that the child attend in an alternate setting separated from their typical group or environment.
- enforcing other conditions placed on the child's ability to attend and participate in activities with their peers.

Expulsion and suspension of a young child creates negative and stressful experiences that impact the child, family, and even the early care educator and must be avoided unless there is an imminent risk of serious harm.

All possible supports must be implemented to prevent a child's behavior from elevating to levels where expulsion or suspension is considered.

Prevention Practices

- Create **learning environments** for children that focus on positive relationships and healthy social emotional development.
- Build **respectful relationships** with families, acknowledging and respecting them as their child's first teacher.
- Develop **discipline practices and policies** based on prevention and positive behavior supports. Follow them consistently and fairly for all children.
- **Communicate** with, and respond to, parents and families in a timely manner.

Intervention

If the program is assured that all preventive measures are in place and there is still need for further support to prevent challenging behaviors, programs can:

- **Conduct and document observations** and reflect on possible precipitating factors of the challenging behavior.
- Meet with the family to **discuss strategies** and create a plan together based on the family's feedback and personal knowledge of the child.
- **Offer resources** and/or referrals for the child to be evaluated by trained professionals.
- Finally, **share any concerns** or complaints.

Partnership

Families and early care educators working together give children the opportunity to thrive and succeed in their early care and education programs.

For more information about the Maryland Prevention of Suspension and Expulsion Policy, please see <https://marylandfamiliesengage.org/preventing-suspension-and-expulsion-policy-statement/> for public schools.

For guidance for early care and education programs, please see <https://marylandfamiliesengage.org/guidance-for-preventing-suspension-and-expulsion/>