Virginia Board of Education

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

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These guidelines have been developed to assist program leaders, educators, and families in supporting the healthy development of young children in early care and education programs. The suggestions and resources are based on the best available research and best practice to ensure that young children are safe, healthy, and learning in early care and education programs. The resources are intended to help families and educators gain the knowledge and skills needed to address the unique needs of each child.

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Overview

Research indicates that high-quality early learning is a critical first step to creating equity in access to early education and ensuring that all children begin kindergarten with an equal opportunity to learn.[1] Suspensions and expulsions of young children deprive them of enriching learning experiences and have a negative impact that extends into grade school and beyond. Yet, recent data indicate that suspension and expulsion occurs regularly in early childhood settings serving children birth to age five.[2] The purpose of this document is to provide guidance regarding policies and best practice in implementing developmentally appropriate experiences for children in early care and education programs (0-5 years) that can prevent suspension and expulsion. Recommended practices promote collaboration between family and professionals and focus on effective classroom management and social-emotional skill development to support young children's healthy development. These policies and practices are based on the most significant research for eliminating suspensions and expulsions in early childhood settings and are for teachers and administrators supporting children in early care and education programs.

This document was developed under the direction of a steering committee led by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). A workgroup of key stakeholders from across the state, representing parents, teachers, principals, school division administrators, early childhood special educators, private child care providers, Head Start personnel, higher education professionals, and health professionals provided input on the document. (See **Appendix A** for a list of Workgroup members.)

This document includes the following sections:

SECTION I: RATIONALE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

High-quality early care and education programs lay the foundation for a child's healthy development. In the first five years of life, young children are learning how to manage their

emotions, make friends, communicate, and express their wants and needs, while learning to read, write, compute, and understand other cognitive/academic concepts. Additionally, children come to school with varying backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. However, the pace of learning and the achievement of specific developmental milestones vary significantly for each child.[3] For some children, learning to manage their behavior and develop healthy social-emotional skills is more difficult or delayed, and they may act out or exhibit aggressive or non-compliant behavior. The environment—where children learn—at home and school, also has a significant impact on children's pace and nature of development and learning. Teachers and parents are often the first to respond to challenging behaviors and need both knowledge and resources to support positive social-emotional development, as well as prevent negative consequences for the child and the family. For some young children exposed to traumatic events (such as abuse and neglect or death of a loved one), trauma-informed care and education helps to mitigate the impact of these negative events by offering specialized support and opportunities to learn coping skills.[4]

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension in Early Childhood Settings states:

> *A child's early years set the trajectory for the relationships and successes they will experience for the rest of their lives, making it crucial that children's earliest experiences truly foster—and never harm—their development. As such, expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings, two stressful and negative experiences young children and their families may encounter in early childhood programs, should be prevented, severely limited, and eventually eliminated.[5]*

All settings where children learn should establish policies that adhere to three guiding principles:

- Communicate clearly the expectations for children and adult behavior in early care and education settings,

- Provide support and training for the early care and education workforce on the positive strategies to manage children's behavior and the prevention of inappropriate or challenging behavior, and

- Ensure the fair and equitable application of positive behavior management and discipline practices in early care and education settings.[6]

Young children who are suspended or expelled experience greater academic failure and grade retention, hold more negative attitudes about school, and have higher rates of dropout than those who are not.[7] Addressing suspension and expulsion practices in early care and education settings requires that all program personnel share responsibility for and commit to taking action to prevent suspension and expulsion. Based on research and best practice, adults—teachers, families, and administrators—can all support young children's healthy development.

- *Teachers* *implement developmentally appropriate, research-informed curricula aligned with early learning standards, and use culturally and linguistically responsive practices that promote social-emotional learning and supportive teacher-child relationships;*

- *Families* *are acknowledged as their child's first teacher and engage in two-way communication with program administrators and teachers to support children's learning and access comprehensive services, as needed, to meet their children's needs;*

- *Administrators* *provide teachers with ongoing support and professional development on teaching practices that promote children's social-emotional development; and*

- *Teachers, Families, and Administrators* *implement strategies to address the individual needs of all children, and, as applicable, the challenging behaviors of some children.*

SECTION II: DEFINITIONS OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Definitions of suspension and expulsion can vary and are determined in some cases by program or state policy and regulation. Virginia state policy and regulation may also apply to specific children (e.g., children with disabilities) or auspices, such as Virginia school divisions. **Table 1: National and State Definitions of Suspension and Expulsion** identifies the national standards related to suspension and expulsion for programs serving young children as context for the available Virginia regulations. These definitions should be included in program guidance, as applicable, and should be shared with families.

TABLE 1: NATIONAL AND STATE DEFINITIONS OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

National and State Sources	Suspension Short-Term	Suspension Long-Term	Expulsion
Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards[8]	Includes all reductions in the amount of time a child may attend a regular group setting, either by requiring the child to cease attendance for a particular period of time, or reducing the number of days or amount of time that a child may attend.	Requiring a child to attend the program in a special place away from the other children in the regular group setting.	Termination of enrollment of a child or family in the regular group setting because of a challenging behavior or a health condition.

National and State Sources	Suspension Short-Term	Suspension Long-Term	Expulsion
Virginia Department of Education, Discipline of Children with Disabilities[9]	School personnel may temporarily remove a child with a disability from the child's current educational setting to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension, to the extent those alternatives are applied to a child without disabilities.	School personnel must determine if there is a pattern or if short-term removals are isolated incidents. The regulations do not impose "absolute limits" on the number of days that a student can be removed from the student's current placement in a school year.	Not applicable
Virginia Board of Education, Student Code of Conduct and Policy Guidelines[10]	Any disciplinary action whereby a student is not permitted to attend school for a period not to exceed ten school days. However, in no case may a student be suspended based solely on instances of truancy.	Any disciplinary action whereby a student is not permitted to attend school for more than ten school days but less than 365 calendar days. However, in no case may a student be suspended based solely on instances of truancy.	Any disciplinary action imposed by a school board or a committee thereof, as provided in school board policy, whereby a student is not permitted to attend school within the school division and is ineligible for readmission for 365 calendar days after the date of the expulsion.

Senate Bill 170 passed by the 2018 Virginia General Assembly amends § 22.1-277.B of the *Code of Virginia*

Except as provided in subsection C or § 22.1-277.07 or 22.1-277.08, no student in preschool through grade three shall be suspended for more than three school days or expelled from attendance at school, unless (i) the offense involves physical harm or credible threat of physical

harm to others or (ii) the local school board or the division superintendent or his designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist, as defined by the Department.

SECTION III: BEST PRACTICES IN PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIORS

To support positive social-emotional development, it is best to prevent challenging behaviors from occurring in the first place, when possible. Teachers, administrators, and parents need sufficient knowledge, skills, and support to ensure children are experiencing a high-quality early childhood program that utilizes developmentally appropriate practice to help each child grow and develop.

This section summarizes four strategies to prevent suspension and expulsion in early care and education programs and ensure children's healthy development. The four strategies are: effective classroom management, promotion of social and emotional development of children, family engagement, and professional development and training resources. Implemented effectively and consistently, together these strategies provide the foundation for the prevention of suspension and expulsion in early care and education settings. (Section V of this document includes many resources offering more information, including professional development modules, videos, and other resources, available for free both in Virginia and nationally.)

Effective Classroom Management

The best remedy for reducing suspension and expulsion is structuring the environment of the early care and education setting to ensure that all children are engaged in learning that is safe, nurturing, and responsive to the needs of each child.[11] Effective classroom management includes positive behavior management practices, attention to a stimulating and developmentally appropriate classroom environment, and daily schedules and routines that provide consistency and security to young children.[12] Specifically, teachers can:

- Set up the classroom to support young children's development;

- Provide a nurturing environment and develop a relationship with every child;

- Develop routines for classroom transitions;

- Ensure materials and educational supplies are designed to support learning and are tailored to student ages;

- Be visible in the classroom and provide clear expectations;

- Reinforce positive behaviors at a high rate and quickly redirect inappropriate behaviors;

- Develop individualized behavior plans to address children's behavior challenges when they occur (discussed in more detail in the next section);

- Engage the family in supporting and reinforcing similar behaviors and consequences in the child's home setting, and refer families to relevant resources; and

- Seek help from mental health professionals when needed, for consultation, as well as for self-care.

Administrators also have a role in supporting teachers to implement effective classroom management by;

- Developing and implementing the program's positive behavior management policies;

- Providing resources and professional development to teachers and families on positive behavior management; and

- Encouraging and supporting teachers as they work to build positive relationships with families to foster open and ongoing communication.

Promote Social and Emotional Development of Children

During the years from birth to age five, young children are learning a tremendous amount about how to manage their emotions, how to interact with peers and adults, and how to communicate to get their needs met. These social-emotional development skills require time and support by caring adults to develop and may be especially difficult for children learning English, children with disabilities, and children from under-resourced families. Research on high-quality programs finds that children benefit most when their teachers engage them in stimulating and emotionally supportive interactions and implement curricula that integrate multiple domains of development.[13] Individualized instruction helps children gain the social skills that support the development of self-control and self-regulation, and these skills contributes to the success and well-being of children.

Children may "act out" or engage in other challenging behavior when they are anxious or frightened, do not have the language to communicate their needs, have been repeatedly frustrated in getting their needs met, and/or are experiencing unusual stress or trauma at home. Often, when a child exhibits challenging behavior, it is not necessarily a willful or "mean" act but instead a way for the child to communicate a message when he or she does not have the language to verbalize a need, albeit inappropriately. The challenging behavior is used instead of appropriate language by a child who has limited social skills or has learned that the behavior will result in meeting his or her needs.[14] Intensive individualized interventions can be used with children who have very persistent and severe challenging behavior and do not respond to the typical preventive practices, child guidance procedures, or social-emotional teaching strategies.[15]

Early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) has been found to be effective in reducing challenging behaviors and increasing positive social skills. Just as importantly, ECMHC has resulted in reductions in teacher stress and burnout.[16] According to the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, "*Early childhood mental health consultation involves a professional consultant with mental health expertise working collaboratively with early care and education staff, programs and families to improve their ability to prevent, identify, and respond to mental health issues among children in their care*." For further information and resources on ECMHC see Section V, Resources.

To promote positive social-emotional development, teachers and administrators can:

- Use curriculum that is evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive and supports children's positive development[17];

- Use valid assessments of children's social-emotional development to determine a child's areas of need and consider using a curriculum that targets social-emotional development to address these needs;

- Integrate social-emotional learning throughout the entire day, through planned activities in small and large group formats, so that academic and social-emotional development content is addressed;

- Implement effective strategies to redirect a child when exhibiting challenging behaviors and tell the child what to do instead of the challenging behavior, provide support to do it and opportunities to practice it;

- Access resources and coaching to help stay on track with consistent implementation and self-regulation;

- Ensure that teachers and administrators have a solid understanding of trauma-informed care;

- Provide some children more intensive social-emotional support through individualized activities and support, as needed; and

- Provide access to universal screening and early childhood mental health consultation.

Family Engagement

Research demonstrates that engaging families in the learning process nurtures positive outcomes for both young children and their families.[18] Benefits for the child appear across

multiple domains in early childhood development, including literacy and language, social and emotional development, and cognition. Families also benefit from increased knowledge about evidence-based parenting skills and gaining access to activities and supports that build family resiliency and well-being, such as health and mental health care, social services, and educational and workforce opportunities.[19]

Effective family engagement practices encourage families to support their children's learning and development in various ways, including respecting the preferences, cultures, and values of individual families. The Office of Head Start's Parent, Family and Community Engagement (OHS PFCE) Framework is a research-based approach for Head Start programs serving preschool children. The Framework (see Appendix C) describes program components that can lead to child and family outcomes and includes resources on each of the elements of the framework that can be accessed to support effective family engagement practices.

Another research-based framework developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein identifies six types of involvement that form a comprehensive family engagement approach. Within these six types, programs choose practices that fit the needs of their families and children.[1] Building on Epstein's framework, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has a dedicated webpage of resources for families, students, and schools on family engagement.[2] For example, the VDOE and the Center for Family Involvement at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University developed a guide, "Tips and Strategies for Increasing Family Involvement in Virginia Schools," and while those strategies are not focused on families of young children specifically, they are very applicable.

This document identifies the following actions that teachers and administrators can take to promote strong family engagement:

- Host events and activities that bring parents and families into the school;

- Communicate with parents frequently, using a variety of methods;

- Create a warm, respectful, and welcoming school environment;

- Be flexible in accommodating parents and families;

- Provide a variety of resources for parents; and

- Support parents in helping their children at home.[20]

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[1] For more information see Section V, The National Network of Partnership Schools for many resources.
[2] For more information see in Section V, Virginia Resources.

To the extent possible, early childhood staff should work to establish relationships with families within their community settings by conducting home visits and hosting meetings in a safe location that is mutually agreed upon by both parties.

Professional Development and Training Resources

Research indicates that teachers of young children are more effective in supporting children's healthy development when they implement a comprehensive curriculum and engage in responsive, reciprocal interactions with children.[21] Creating a system to support teachers through professional development and training that is focused on developmentally appropriate expectations for children's social-emotional development, and strategies to promote positive behavior management and mental health will give teachers the tools they need to prevent challenging behaviors.

It is important for teachers to understand typical child development, as developmental shifts may create periods of challenging behaviors. A knowledgeable early childhood teacher will be able to recognize behavior indicative of typical development and distinguish those that are more serious. In order to provide the best support for some children, teachers need specialized knowledge in "trauma-informed" education or care, to gain a greater understanding of how chronic stress, family or community trauma and violence, and substance abuse may impact children's behavior in the early care and education setting.[22] Children who experience trauma early in their lives often exhibit developmental delays, withdrawal, and/or aggressive or uncontrollable behavior.[23] Teachers and families need support in addressing the needs of these children and implementing helping and healing strategies to support children and families in crisis.

Recent research points to the role of implicit bias which may impact how teachers interpret the behaviors of children of different genders, race, or other factors. Implicit bias refers to "the automatic and unconscious stereotypes" that cause people to react or make decisions in certain ways.[24] Attention to how race, gender, and other factors may inadvertently influence the reporting and incidence of challenging behaviors and use of suspension or expulsion should be considered in professional development.[25] Although the behaviors of children may impact adult decision-making processes, implicit biases about gender, race, and other factors may influence how those behaviors are perceived and how they are addressed, creating a vicious cycle over time that exacerbates inequalities. Although limited research is available on effective strategies to reduce implicit bias in early childhood education, an inclusive organizational culture of the setting and individual values and practices of adults can reduce its impact.[26]

To provide teachers with the skills and knowledge to support all children, administrators can:

- Use data to identify priorities and plan professional learning communities to provide teachers and administrators with targeted professional development and training;

- Align training with Virginia's [Early Learning and Development Standards](#) particularly the social-emotional development indicators and strategies for adults, [Virginia's Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers](#), [Virginia's Standards for Licensed Family Day Homes,](#) and the standards of the [Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5)](#).

- Coach and support practitioners on implementing effective strategies to manage challenging behavior;

- Provide training on trauma-informed care and implications for teaching practices;

- Engage families in promoting positive social-emotional development and effective strategies to reduce challenging behavior (see resources in Section V on Family Engagement); and

- Provide comprehensive supports to families of vulnerable children, recognizing that a child's home environment heavily influences a child's behavior, and the child's parents/guardians may need mental health services themselves.

SECTION IV: SUGGESTED STEPS TO PREVENT AND SEVERELY LIMIT SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

The Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Department of Social Services, and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation are working together to provide early childhood teachers, administrators, and families with the knowledge, skills, and resources to support children's healthy social-emotional development. With prevention as the primary goal, suspension in early childhood programs should be severely limited. In most cases, removing a child from the early childhood setting should involve transition to a more appropriate setting. Expulsion from a publicly-funded early childhood program is not appropriate and should not be warranted.

Program administrators need to ensure the prevention practices noted in [Section III](#) are implemented effectively and that family members have been fully engaged in the ongoing communication and monitoring of the child's behavior while in the early care and education setting. Program administrators should ensure the family has access to professional services, such as referrals to a community mental health center, to provide support in addressing the child's challenging behavior, or a health care professional if there is an underlying health concern. If a child in question has a disability and is in the process of being identified, or has been identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), state and federal special education rules and regulations governing suspension/expulsion must be followed.

The following steps to addressing suspension and expulsion are drawn from national performance standards identified in *Caring for Our Children, Preventing Expulsions,*

Suspensions, and Other Limits in Services, Standard 2.2.0.8[27] and the Virginia Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Student Service's *Guidelines for Conducting Functional Behavioral Assessment and Developing Positive Behavioral Support and Interventions.*[28] This information can serve as a source of guidance for programs developing policy to address issues when prevention procedures have failed to resolve the challenging or disruptive behavior of a child.

Step 1: Analyze and Understand the Source of the Behavior:

Many behavior problems in early childhood can be eliminated by consistently applying strategies of proven effectiveness, including clear rules and expectations, positive feedback, and self-management, as discussed previously. When a child exhibits or engages in challenging behaviors that are not easily resolved through evidence-based practices or seem to be escalating, further attention is warranted to ensure the safety of the child and other children and adults in the class. Teachers and administrators should do the following:

- Engage the family in a spirit of collaboration regarding how the child's behaviors may be best handled, including discussing appropriate solutions that have worked at home or in other settings.

- Work with the family and the child's primary health provider to assess the health of the child for vision, hearing, and other chronic or underlying illnesses, including social-emotional issues that may impact behavior.

- Together with the family, consider if the child may have a delay or disability and require an evaluation for supports and services through either early intervention (IDEA Part C) or early childhood special education, as well as any other appropriate community-based services (e.g., child mental health clinic) is warranted.

- If abuse or neglect is suspected, then appropriate child protection services must be informed.

- Review the adequacy of the classroom environment, curriculum, and instruction in meeting the developmental and educational needs of the child.

- Gather information about the behavior. Collect information on the events or conditions that typically occur before and after the behavior and on the times, conditions, and individuals present when problem behavior is most versus least likely to occur.

- Precisely define the problem behavior in measurable, observable, and objective terms (e.g., when asked to join the teacher at the center, student throws objects at other students and the teacher and knocks over computer monitors on the counter).

- Review data and information to identify the pattern of events that predicts when and under what circumstances the behavior is most versus least-likely to occur, what is maintaining the behavior, and what the underlying cause of the child's behavior.

- Formulate a statement regarding the likely cause of the problem behavior. The statement relates to what the data suggest the student may be communicating by engaging in a particular behavior.

Step 2: Focus on Intervention to Meet the Needs of the Child.

Using the data gathered in step 1, develop a customized plan for the child. The plan should address the roles of supportive adults (e.g., teachers, family members, mental health professionals) in ensuring the child is supported at home and in school to develop positive behaviors. Teachers and administrators should do the following:

- Develop a plan of intervention with the family for reducing and eliminating the behavior, in settings where it occurs, that includes one or more strategies to eliminate the problem behavior, one or more strategies to promote a replacement behavior, and any supplementary aids or supports required to address the behavior. Include a timeline and a process for monitoring progress.

- Implement a professional development plan for all teachers, paraprofessionals, and service providers who support the child. Provide information and support to families as well.

- Evaluate the plan and determine if the challenging behavior has been addressed. If so, continue to implement the plan, communicate with the family, and provide strategies for the family to implement at home to support the child's behavior. If the child's behavior continues to be of concern, consider revising the plan and/or refer to the next steps.

In very few cases, if any, after all other measures have been taken to prevent and address challenging behaviors, limiting early care and education services, suspending an individual child may be deemed necessary to ensure the safety of other children and adults. Expulsion of a child from a publicly-funded early childhood program is not appropriate and should not be warranted. However, whether a program allows a child to be suspended or expelled is determined by the policy or guidance of a specific program and in accordance with federal and state law*.

*Senate Bill 170 passed by the 2018 Virginia General Assembly amends § 22.1-277.B of the *Code of Virginia*

Except as provided in subsection C or § 22.1-277.07 or 22.1-277.08, no student in preschool through grade three shall be suspended for more than three school days or expelled from attendance at school, unless (i) the offense involves physical harm or credible threat of physical harm to others or (ii) the local school board or the division superintendent or his designee finds that aggravating circumstances exist, as defined by the Department.

Step 3: Plan for Options and Transitions.

If the problem behavior **cannot be resolved** through use of evidence-based practices and due to the seriousness of the problem, an alternate setting may be deemed necessary by program administrators and/or the family. The following behaviors and actions listed in a-c below indicate that alternative program options may better meet the needs of the child and ensure the safety of other children and adults in the early care and education settings.

A. The repeated behavior of the child clearly jeopardizes the physical safety of the child, his/her classmates, or the adults in the classroom.

B. Possible interventions and supports aimed at providing a physically safe environment for the child, his/her classmates, or the adults in the classroom have been *exhausted*.

C. Continued placement in this class and/or program clearly fails to meet the mental health and/or social-emotional needs of the child.

The program administrators should develop a transition plan with the family, in consultation with a qualified early childhood mental health consultant, qualified special education staff, or qualified community-based mental health specialist. The transition plan should address the following:

- If applicable, collaboratively identify a different private or publicly funded early care and education program in the community that is better equipped to address the behavioral concerns (e.g., therapeutic preschool programs, Head Start or Early Head Start, prekindergarten programs in the public schools that have access to additional support staff, etc.), or publicly funded supports and services for infants and toddlers with a delay or disability (i.e., early intervention) or preschoolers (i.e., early childhood special education).

- With written parent/guardian permission, the child's primary care provider should be consulted and a referral for a comprehensive assessment by a qualified mental health provider, if available, and the appropriate special education system should be initiated.

Step 4: Monitor and Evaluate the Transition Plan.

Administrators should develop processes to monitor the implementation of the proposed plan for the child, including consulting with the new setting or placement, checking in with families to assess the new placement, and collecting data to determine if the placement is continuing to meet the child's needs. The specific steps to address the ongoing best interests of the child will be determined based on the individual plan or circumstances.

Conclusion

These guidelines have been developed to assist program leaders, educators, and families in supporting the healthy development of young children in early care and education programs. The suggestions and resources are based on the best available research and best practice to ensure that young children are safe, healthy, and learning in early care and education programs. The resources that follow are intended to help families and educators gain the knowledge and skills needed to address the unique needs of each child.

SECTION V: RESOURCES FOR PROMOTING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PART A: Virginia Based Resources and Services to Support Social-Emotional Development for Children and Families

Virginia Department of Education websites and resources:

- [Advancing Effective Interactions and Instruction (AEII) Early Childhood Professional Development Workshop Series](#). This website from the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia provides collection of multi-learning modules on topics such as supporting self-regulation and social problem solving.
- [For Families and Students](#). This website has three dedicated pages with resources: (1) For families—getting involved, (2) For students—supporting student success, and (3) For schools—partnering with families.

- [Tiered Systems of Support](#). This website provides information and resources for school administrators, teachers, and school personnel to support social and emotional, behavioral and academic needs of the student in a system that is data-driven and support is leveled by need.

- [Virginia's Early Learning and Developmental Standards (ELDS), Birth-Five Learning Guidelines.](#) Virginia's new set of comprehensive early learning and developmental standards for young children, birth to age five. The standards focus on five "Areas of Development": Approaches to Plan and Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Communication, Language, and Literacy Development, Health and Physical Development and Cognitive Development.

- Virginia Department of Social Services websites and resources:

- [Child Care Assistance.](#) This website includes information on the Child Care Subsidy Program which provides financial assistance to eligible families to help pay for the cost of child care so they can work or attend education or training programs.

- [Child Care Provider Resources](#). This website provides guidance documents, professional development opportunities, and information for child care providers.

- [Child Day Care](#). This website includes information on licensed and unlicensed child care regulations in Virginia.

- [ChildCareVA.com](). This website provides user-friendly resources for child care providers, parents, and the community.

- [Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5) is a measurement and improvement system that focuses on the quality of all publicly-funded birth-five classrooms and supports families to choose quality programming across different program types.]()

- [Virginia Infant and Toddler Specialist Network](). This Network is funded through the Virginia Department of Social Services and strives to help caregivers of infants and toddlers find community resources, and provides professional development, coaching, and other assistance to home-based and center-based child care providers.

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Resources:

- [Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia.]() This website provides early intervention supports and services for children up to age two, their families, and providers.

Virginia Commonwealth University Resources:

- [Early Childhood Mental Health-Virginia.]() This resource is provided by Virginia Commonwealth University's Partnership for People with Disabilities and provides resources to help parents and caregivers support their children, ages birth through eight, with mental health supports.

- [The Virginia Association for Infant Mental Health]() (VAIMH) is an interdisciplinary, professional organization established to nurture and promote the optimal development of infants, toddlers, and families through relationship-based training and advocacy efforts.

- Other Virginia Resources:
- [Community College Workforce Alliance]() hosts online courses for early care and education practitioners that are provided by the Virginia Department of Social Services. Low-cost courses are offered in positive behavior management and social-emotional development, among other topics.

- [Cross-Sector Professional Development Team](). This website provides professional development information for practitioners working in any early care and education sector (e.g., child care, education, health, home visiting, etc.). Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development aims to build a unified system to support families and their children from birth through age five.

- [Early Impact Virginia](#), an Alliance for Family Education and Support in the Home, partners with home visiting programs across Virginia to achieve the greatest reach and efficiency of services. They also provide a centralized path for home visitors to pursue professional development, advancing the quality of services.

PART B: Free, online national resources that can inform policy and practice, and professional development for program administrators, teachers, and families.

- [Birth to Five, Watch Me Thrive](#). This federal effort through the Office of the Administration for Children and Families was created to help families and providers learn more about child development and developmental and behavioral screenings for children.

- [Center on the Developing Child.](#) This page from Harvard University focuses on the science of early childhood. Resources provided include the key concepts of brain architecture, serve and return, toxic stress, executive function/self-regulation, and resilience.

- [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning](#). The focus of this national resource center, funded by the Office of Head Start and Child Care Bureau, is to promote social-emotional development and school readiness for young children within Head Start and Child Care programs. This Center provides [Parent Training Modules](#) which consist of evidence-based practices and resources that are useful in addressing the social-emotional needs of young children.

- [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)](#). The mission of this Collaborative is to advance the practice of promoting academic, social, and emotional learning for preschool to high school kids. The website has many resources for educators and families at the state and local levels. See the resources, notably the [Guide to Effective Social-Emotional Learning Programs](#).

- [Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#). This page from Georgetown University's Center for Child and Human Development provides activities within the Center as well as resources around the topic of early childhood mental health consultation. This strategy supports social-emotional development and addresses challenging behaviors. One activity within the Center, the Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, provides several modules to learn how to help children who have undergone trauma. For more information on how to deal with trauma, see [Tutorial 7: Recognizing and Addressing Trauma in Infants, Young Children, and their Families.](#)

- [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA): Reducing Early Childhood Expulsion and Suspension](#). This page collects resources that pertain to suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings. This includes items posted in the ECTA eNotes, federal guidance and resources, and resources from national centers and associations.
    - The guide is a research-based tool aimed at helping eliminate suspensions and expulsions in early childhood programs by addressing the underlying root causes.

The guide provides information, recommended policies and practices, resources, and tools targeted at three levels or tiers of support to help program leaders.

- National Association for the Education of Young Children, Engaging Diverse Families. These resources from NAEYC offer examples of successful family engagement practices for all families.

- National Council for Behavioral Health, Trauma Informed Care provides resources and videos on trauma-informed care.

- National Network of Partnership Schools: Six Types of Models of Parent Involvement. Established at Johns Hopkins University in 1996, NNPS provides schools, divisions, states, and organizations with research-based approaches to organize and sustain excellent programs of family and community involvement that will increase student success in school. The website includes many resources for parents, families, school divisions, and facilitators.

- Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports. The goal of this technical assistance center, established by the U.S. Department of Education, is to develop, design, and evaluate positive behavioral interventions and supports. See also the e-book, Aligning and Integrating Family Engagement in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Concepts and Strategies for Families and Schools in Key Contexts (2017), which provides guidance for enhancing family engagement in schools from prekindergarten through high school. The book includes information on the foundations of family engagement (FE), a review of FE in the context of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and strategies for applying ideas in local sites and across systems.

- Preventing Expulsion from Preschool and Childcare. This website provides numerous resources on suspension and expulsion in early childhood education, including videos, reports, journals, and tools to prevent suspension and expulsion in preschool.

- Promoting Policies that Support Young Children's Mental Health. This project from the National Center for Children in Poverty describes strategies for creating a system of supports for young children's mental health and includes tools state planners can use to assess progress.

- Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children: Effective Practices. This resource offers information on creating effective classroom environments, scheduling, rules,

rituals, and routines that support the prevention of challenging behaviors in young children.

- [Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children](). This program funded by the Department of Education provides resources to help both families and educators with effective practices to improve social-emotional outcomes for children who have disabilities or are at risk of developing a disability.

- [The IRIS Center at Vanderbilt University](). The goal of the IRIS Center is to improve educational outcomes for all children, especially those with disabilities. Resource topics include [Early Intervention/Early Childhood](), and are organized by modules, case studies, video vignettes, etc.

- [The Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](). The Center of Excellence helps states, tribes, and communities use IECMHC as a tool to promote mental health and school readiness. The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) Toolbox offers free interactive planning tools, guides, videos, and other resources to support IECMHC efforts in your state, tribe, or community.

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Early Childhood Development, Reducing Suspension and Expulsion Practices in Early Childhood Settings](). This website provides resources on suspension and expulsion, including the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education policy statements and recommendations to assist states and public and private early childhood programs in partnering to prevent and severely limit expulsions and suspensions in early learning settings and other best practice documents.

APPENDIX A: Virginia Guidelines for the Prevention of Suspension and Expulsion of Young Children Workgroup Members

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Appendix B: Definitions of Key Terms Used in this Document

- **Social-Emotional Development:** Social-emotional development includes the child's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others.

- **Challenging Behaviors:** Challenging behavior is defined as any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults.

- **Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP):** Developmentally appropriate practice, often shortened to DAP, is an approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development. DAP involves teachers meeting young children where they are (by stage of development), both as individuals and as part of a group; and helping each child meet challenging and achievable learning goals.

- **Implicit Bias:** Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control.

Appendix C: Office of Head Start's Parent, Family and Community Engagement (OHS PFCE) Framework[29]

	Positive & Goal Oriented Relationships		
	Program Environment	Family Well-Being	
Program Leadership			
	Family Partnerships	Positive Parent-Child Relationships	Children are ready for school and sustain development and learning gains through third grade.
Continuous Program Improvement		Families as Lifelong Educators	
	Teaching and Learning	Families as Learners	
		Family Connections to Peers and Community	
Professional Development	Community Partnerships	Families as Advocates and Leaders	
PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS	PROGRAM IMPACT AREAS	FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES	CHILD OUTCOMES

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