Teachers’ Perceptions of Children’s Challenging Behavior

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The Infant/Toddler & School-Age Child Care Institute
St. Louis, Missouri
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FLASHBACK

2002
• Preschool children referred for evaluations due to expulsion
  • What are the rates? Who is most vulnerable?
  • What is the relevance of ECMHC
  • Curiosity; Strategy
Prekindergarteners Left Behind (Gilliam, 2005)

- 3,898 randomly selected prekindergarten lead teachers
  - All 40 states with PreK
  - 81.0% response rate
- Wide variety of classroom settings
  - 58% public school preK
  - 29% Head Start (14% in PS, 15% not)
  - 13% Other (Profit & Nonprofit Child Care)
Prekindergarteners Left Behind (2005)

• The Expulsion Question
  – Over past 12 months
  – Required terminating participation in program
  – Behavioral problem
  – No transition to more appropriate setting
PreK Expulsion Results: Nation

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

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

- PreK Expulsion Rate = 6.7 / 1,000
- K-12 Expulsion Rate = 2.1 / 1,000
State PreK Expulsion Rates

- 100

Yale School of Medicine
Child Care Expulsion Rates

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

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

- K-12: 2.1
- PreK: 6.7
- Child Care: 27.4

Many Factors Predict Preschool Expulsion

**Child-Teacher Ratio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Low Stress</th>
<th>Average Stress</th>
<th>High Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 8</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 to 9</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 11</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 and Up</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Program Length of Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day Type</th>
<th>Low Stress</th>
<th>Average Stress</th>
<th>High Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Half-Day</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Day</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended-Day</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Job Stress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Level</th>
<th>Low Stress</th>
<th>Average Stress</th>
<th>High Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Access to Behavioral Supports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access Type</th>
<th>Low Stress</th>
<th>Average Stress</th>
<th>High Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Access</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Call Access</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Site Access</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preschool Expulsion Is NOT a Child Behavior.

It is an Adult Decision.
Who Gets Expelled?

• 4-year-olds 50% more likely than 3’s

• Black preschoolers more than 2 times as likely as white preschoolers

• Boys more than 4 times as likely as girls
The 3 B’s of Expulsion Risk

• BIG

• BLACK

• BOY
March 2014 (2011-2012 data)

- “Black children make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of preschool children suspended more than once.”
- “Boys receive more than three out of four out-of-school preschool suspensions.”

June 2016 (2013-2014 data)

- Black preschoolers 3.6 times as likely to be suspended as white preschoolers
- Blacks represent 19% of preschoolers, but 47% of suspensions
- Boys represent 54% of preschoolers, but 78% of suspensions
So, Why Are Our Boys and Our Black Children Most At Risk?

• Potential Reasons:
  – Boys are more susceptible to stressors (Autor et al, 2015).
  – Children of color often have more stressors.
  – Children of color often attend programs of poorer quality and fewer resources (Barnett et al, 2013).

• Yet, these alone don’t seem to account for all of the disparities in early suspensions and expulsions.
What Else May Account?

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

  - Black boys more likely to be suspended/expelled for similar behaviors in elementary school (Skiba et al., 2011).
  
  - Biases about black boys
    - Older (Goff et al., 2014)
    - Culpable (Goff et al., 2014; Eberhardt et al, 2004; Todd et al., 2016)
    - Less likely to feel pain (Dore et al., 2014)
  
  - “Shifting Standards” (Harber et al., 2012)
Finally,
A Study of Implicit Bias in ECE

- Jan 2015 – Funding
  (Thanks, W.K. Kellogg Foundation!)

- Nov 2015 – Collected Data

- Sep 2016 – Released Report of Findings
Participants (N = 132; 94% Female)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center type</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith-affiliated program</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-based PreK</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For profit</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., independent school, special education)</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years working at current location</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years working in early education</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eye Tracking Procedures

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

Please remember the letter of the child who you believe required the most of your attention.
Eye-Tracking Results

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

Main: $\Lambda=.693$, $F=50.87$, $p<.001$, $d=1.33$.
Interaction: $\Lambda=.925$, $F=9.36$, $p<.01$, $d=.57$.
Vignette Procedure

- Standardized vignette, manipulated child sex and race: DeShawn, Latoya, Jake, Emily

- “Act as if this child is in your classroom”

- Background or No Background
Vignette Results

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

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

\[ F=8.99, \ p=.004, \ \eta^2=.10. \]

\[ F=5.69, \ p=.019, \ \eta^2=.06. \]
Bias Isn’t Just A Police Problem, It’s A Preschool Problem

September 28, 2016 - 5:00 AM ET
Heard on Morning Edition

A new study out of Yale found that pre-K teachers, white and black alike, spend more time watching black boys, expecting trouble.

LA Johnson/NPR
Why Care about Disparities in Early Expulsion?
We love preschool teachers!

“Your heart is slightly larger than normal, but that’s because you’re a preschool teacher.”
“You got a little bias stuck between your teeth.”
Behavioral Consultation Predicts Decreased Expulsion

Access to Behavioral Support Staff

Early Childhood Consultation Partnership

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

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

WHEN BABIES SEE SHRINKS
Sometimes very young minds need special care
NEW RESEARCH

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: Results of a Statewide Random-Controlled Evaluation

Walter S. Gilboa, md, Angela N. Maquina, md, Chia R. Reyes, md

Objective: Despite recent federal recommendations calling for increased funding for early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) as a means to decrease preschool expulsions, no randomized controlled evaluations of this form of intervention have been reported in the scientific literature. This study is the first attempt to isolate the effects of ECMHC for enhancing classroom quality, decreasing teacher-rated behavior problems, and decreasing the likelihood of expulsion in targeted children in early childhood classrooms.

Method: The sample consisted of 776 target children (3-5 years old) and 68 preschool classrooms and teachers randomly assigned to receive ECMHC through Connecticut’s successful Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP) or waitlist control treatment. Before randomization, teachers selected 2 target children in each classroom whose behavior most prompted the request for ECCP. Evaluation measurements were collected before and after treatment, and child behavior and social skills and overall quality of the classroom environment were assessed. Hierarchical linear modeling was used to evaluate the effectiveness of ECCP and to account for the nested structure of the study design.

Conclusion: ECCP resulted in significant decreases across several domains of teacher-rated internalizing and problem behaviors and a viable and potentially cost-effective means for addressing mental health services in early childhood settings. Clinical and policy implications for ECMHC are discussed.

Key words: early childhood mental health consultation, preschool children, behavioral outcomes, early childhood education, preschool expulsion

On December 10, 2014, the US Department of Health and Human Services and the US Department of Education issued a joint policy statement and recommendations for states and communities, urging the use of evidence-based approaches to decrease inappropriate expulsions in all US early care and education programs. The present study is the first true randomized controlled evaluation designed to isolate the effects of ECMHC on decreasing the challenging classroom behaviors that often lead to expulsion, thus addressing a fiercely negotiated urgent need. Serious behavior problems during the preschool years are among the most difficult problems that early care and education professionals face. Poor peer relations, and academic difficulties during kindergarten, later elementary school, and middle school. Misconduct problems in early childhood often occur in young children who are often at the highest risk for school failure and emotional/behavioral problems. Early intervention, when delivered to children, has potential to prevent a wide array of problems later in life, including academic, social, and emotional development. Research suggests that providing support to families and teachers, and ensuring that children are matched with high-quality early education and intervention programs can prevent severe behavior problems in young children from low-income communities and families. Some preschoolers unfortunately begin their educational experiences with disengagement and decreased opportunities to succeed.
Results (Target Children)

**CTRS Oppositional**

\[(F = 6.05^*; d = 0.39)\]

**CTRS Hyperactivity**

\[(F = 13.28^{***}; d = 0.57)\]

**CTRS Total Behavior Prob**

\[(F = 11.61^{***}; d = 0.63)\]

**SSRS Externalizing**

\[(F = 5.01^*; d = 0.41)\]
Preschool Susensions Really Happen And That's Not OK With Connecticut
A new observational measure of the relationships and “mental health climate” of early childhood settings.

Measures all interactions.
- Staff-Child
- Child-Child
- Staff-Staff

Measures staff attunement to overt and subtle cues, verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

Addresses inclusion and individuation.
Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning & Development (CHILD)

- 28 items in 9 domains.
  - Transitions
  - Directions & Rules
  - Social & Emotional Learning
  - Staff Awareness
  - Staff Cooperation
  - Staff-Child Interactions
  - Individualized & Developmentally-Appropriate Pedagogy
  - Child Behaviors

- Requires about 2-3 hours of observation.
Current classroom quality measures typically...

- **Focus on the “instructional portion of the day”**
  - Under-emphasize the importance of transitions
  - Ignore opportunities during free-play, choice-time, meals, etc.

- **Focus on the “lead teacher”**
  - Ignore most of the adults in the room

- **Focus on the “majority of children”**
  - Ignore issues of inclusion and individuation
Peach Trees & Babies
Thank You!  To Read More...

www.ziglercenter.yale.edu

Follow me on Twitter: @WalterGilliam