

# ENHANCING THE SUPPLY OF INFANT TODDLER CARE THROUGH INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION



Positive Learning for Arkansas' Youngest

**NICOLA EDGE**

**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL  
SCIENCES**

# Table Discussion

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## Part 1

In your state, community or program, list the kinds of changes you would like to see in infant-toddler classrooms to enhance quality

## Part 2

Identify some of the barriers that may be keeping those changes from occurring

# Objectives

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Provide an Overview of IECMHC

Describe the Arkansas Model of IECMHC

Share data on effectiveness of ECMHC in raising quality and supporting children

# What is IECMHC?

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Teams mental health professionals with child-serving professionals to improve children's social, emotional and behavioral health and development.

Builds the capacity of providers and families to understand the powerful influence of their relationships and interactions on children's development.

Consultants partner to identify and support children with and at risk for mental health challenges as early as possible.

- Project PLAY is Arkansas' ECMHC program staffed primarily through partnerships with Community Mental Health Centers
- Services provided by mental health professional certified as consultant to child care
- Provide system-level consultation to child care and child welfare systems

# Programmatic/Classroom Focused Consultation

- Consultants work with teachers to improve the care offered to *all children* in their classroom by helping to identify attitudes, beliefs and practices and classroom conditions that may be undermining quality relationships between teachers and children.

Classroom Consultation



- 6 month partnership
- Visits once a week
- Serve minimum licensed, quality rated, state pre-k and Head Start
- Also offer a menu of trainings
- 2010 – prioritized ECMHC for centers serving foster children

Project PLAY Model



# Programmatic Consultation for Staff and Programs

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Classroom observation

Strategies for prosocial  
environment

Training on behavior  
management

Support for reflective  
practices

Promote staff wellness

Address communication  
issues

Promote team building

Training on cultural  
competence

# Child-Specific Consultation

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- When a specific child's behavior is of concern to parents or teachers, the Mental Health Consultant helps these adults understand, assess and address the child's needs by developing an individualized plan with the parents and teachers.

## Child Focused Consultation



- 3 month partnership
- Visits once or twice a week
- Offer short-term response plan and longer-term prevention plan
- Linkage to other services
- Dramatically increased in 2016

## Project PLAY Model





# Child- and Family-Centered Consultation

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Child observations

Program practices

Staff support for individual and group behavior management

Modeling/coaching

Link to community

Training on behavior management

Modeling ways to support individual child

Education on children's mental health

Advocacy for family

# What ECMHC “Isn’t”

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Formal diagnostic evaluations

Therapeutic play groups

Individual therapy

Family therapy

Staff therapy

Family support groups

# ECE Teacher-Level Outcomes

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## Gain Skills

- Teaching about Feelings
- Behavior Management

## Improve Quality

- Teacher-Child Interactions
- Staff interactions

## Improve Outcomes

- Reduced staff stress & turnover
- CLASS Scores

# AR Data on Improving Quality through IECMHC

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Evaluated impact of ECMHC in 46 centers

- Majority non-participants in quality rating system
- 37% of teachers had an Associate's degree or higher
- Teachers had average of 8 years of experience

Later evaluated in context of expulsion prevention initiative

# Improvements in Quality in AR Classrooms (N=120)

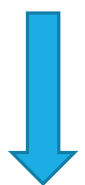
## TEACHER- CHILD INTERACTIONS

## MENTAL HEALTH CLIMATE



**Sensitivity:** becoming more sensitive and positive in interactions

**Engagement:** more engaged in caring for the children



**Punitive Actions:** use of yelling, humiliation or using harsh words.

Transitions

Directions and rules

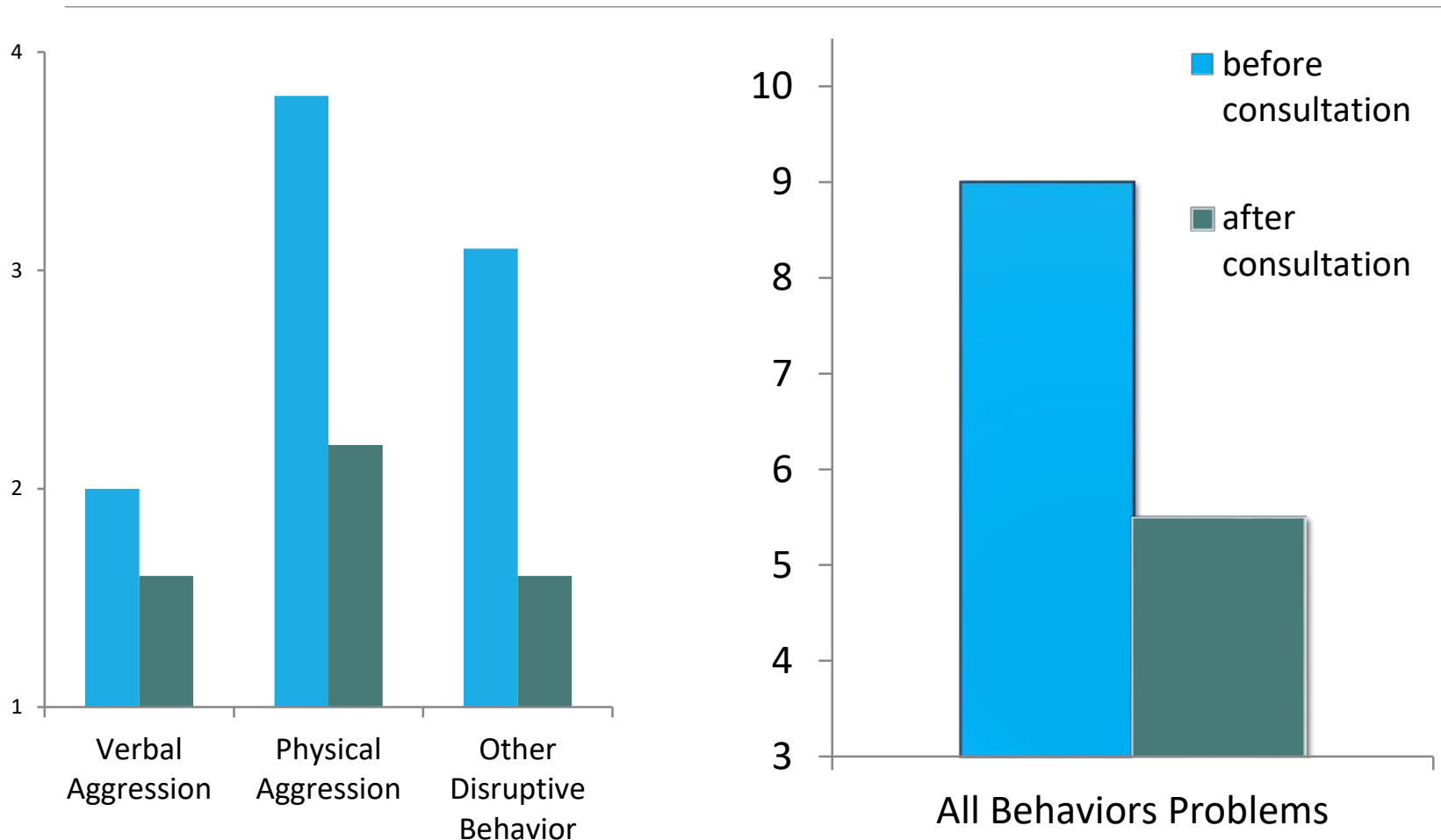
Staff awareness & affect

Staff-child interactions

Teaching feelings and problem solving

Developmentally appropriate practice

# Reduced Disruptive Behaviors Observed in AR Classrooms



# Evidence of Changes in Child- and Family- Level Outcomes

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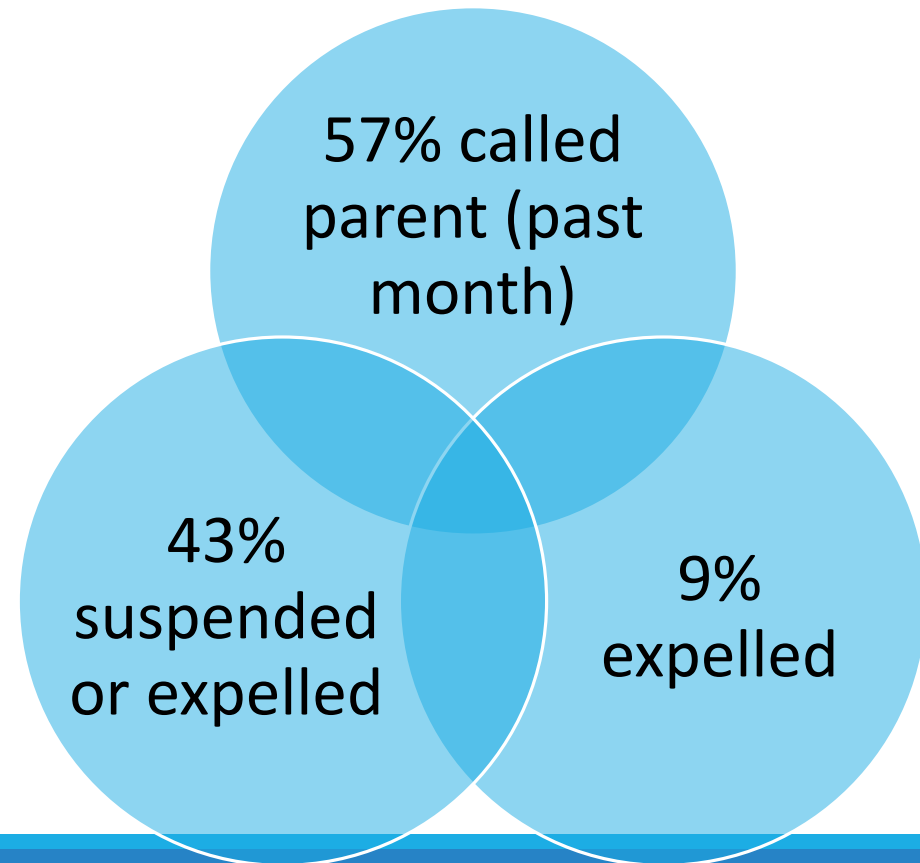
# IECMHC to Prevent Expulsion

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New policies and supports in AR to reduce suspension and expulsion

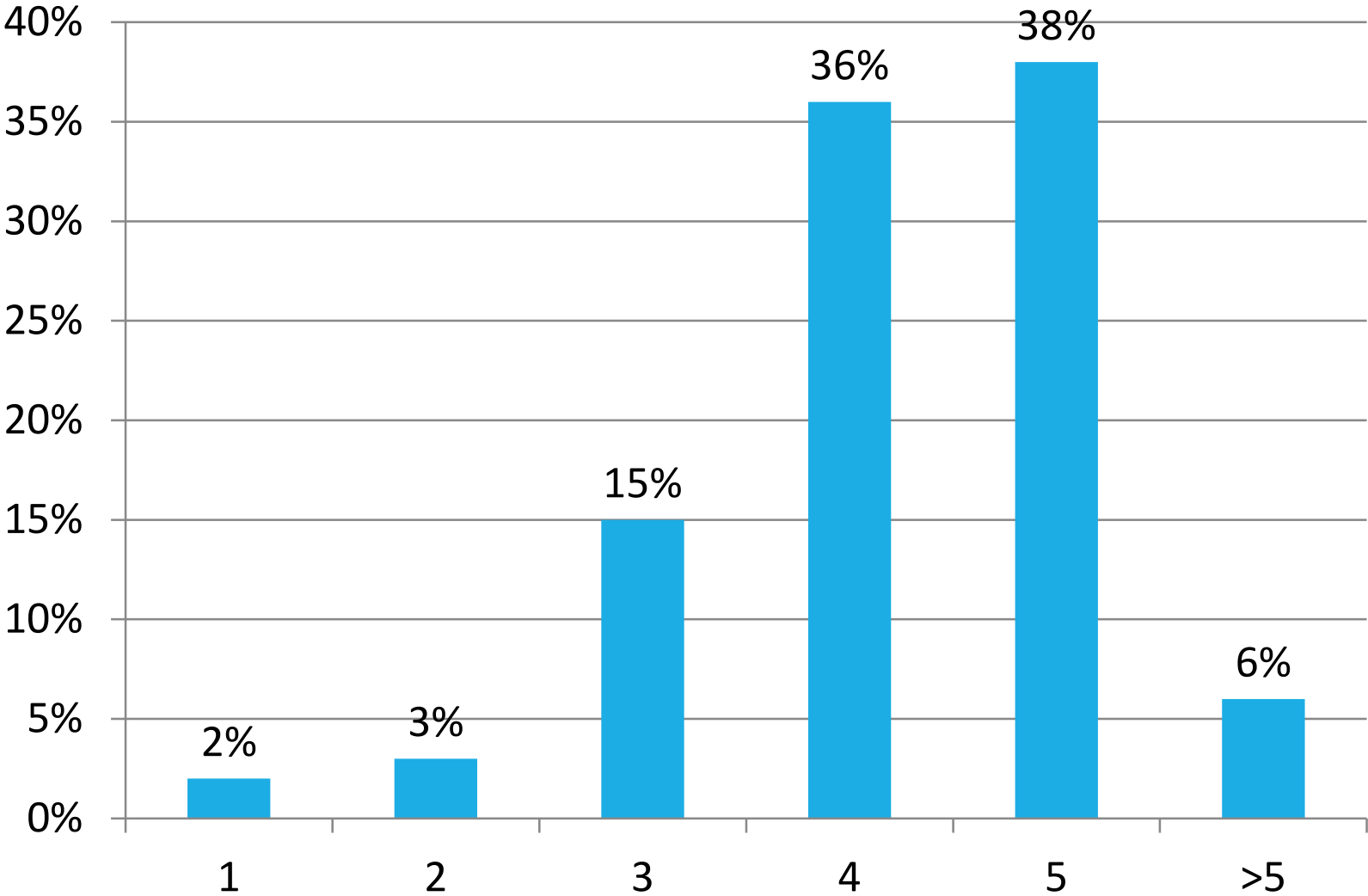
IECMHC is part of support system

2016 AR Survey





# IECMHC REFERRALS BY AGE



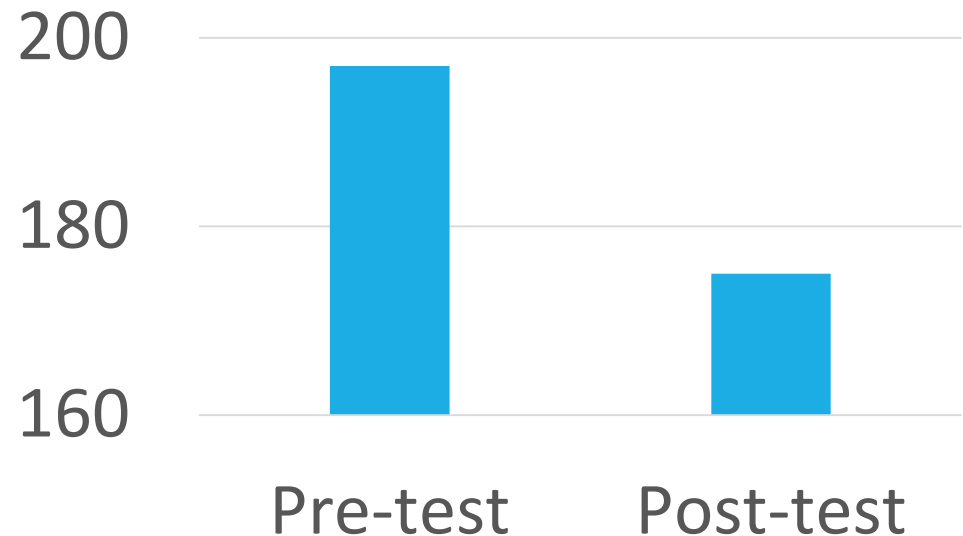
# “Johnny”

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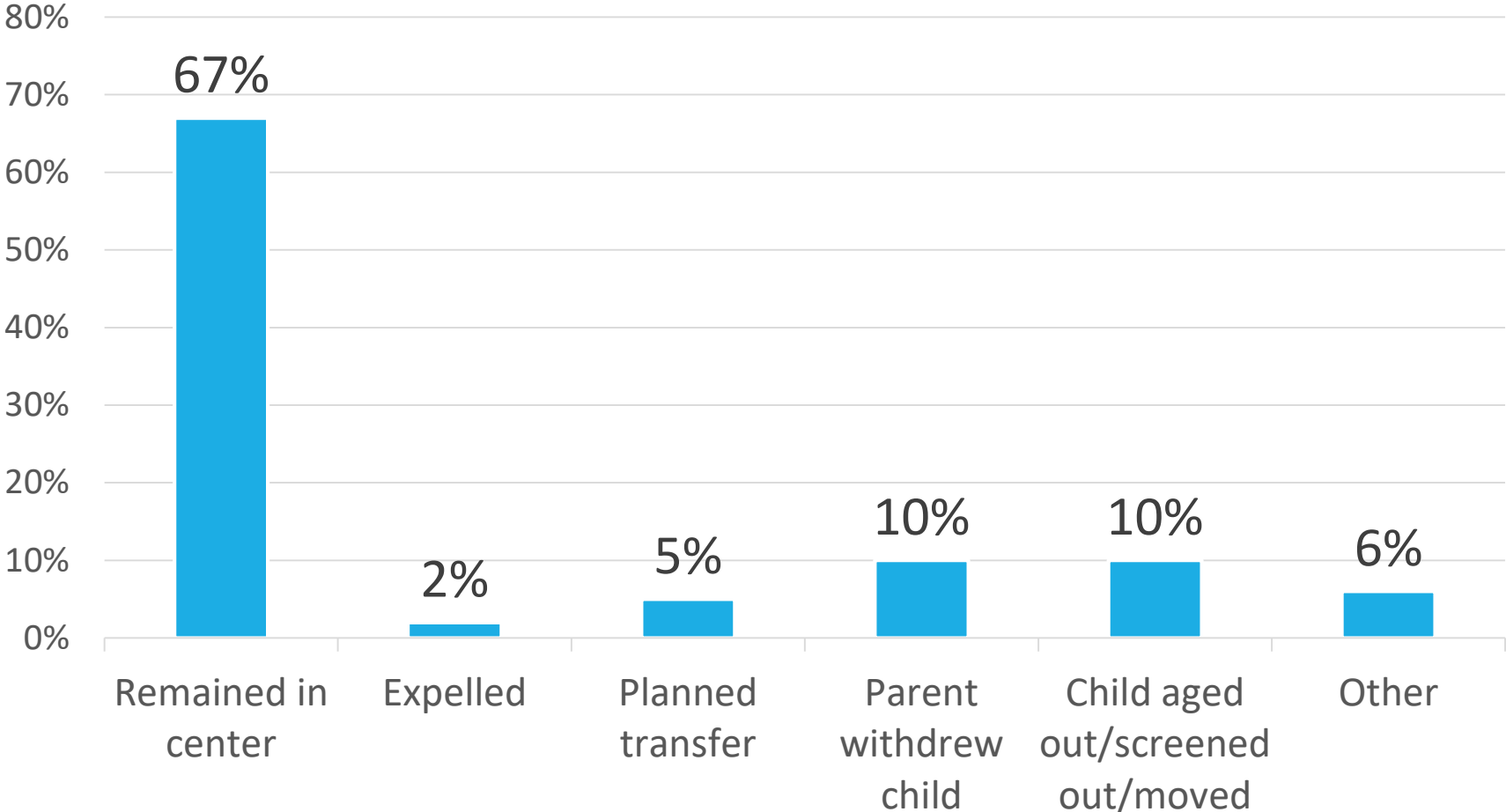
# Child Behavior

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- Average child externalizing behaviors were well above the clinically significant range at pre-test
- The frequency of the behaviors decreased significantly from pre-post test



# Expulsion Outcomes



# Financing

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Triage specialists pulled from within various units within DHS/DCCECE

Shifted resources to expand ECMHC to several new sites

TA and ECMHC funded through CCDF and state pre-k quality improvement dollars

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ANY  
QUESTIONS?





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