

# How Do We Know What's Working: Embracing Data & Assessment in State Expulsion Prevention Strategies

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*QRIS CONFERENCE SESSION 407*

*JULY 16, 2018*

*Jordana Ash, Colorado Office of Early Childhood; Nikki Edge, University of Arkansas; Carey McCann, BUILD Initiative*



## Today's Session...

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Be grounded in the research and explore drivers of expulsion

Address the question: how do we know if we are reducing and preventing exclusionary practices?

- Role of State Policy
- 4 “P’s of Data”
- Colorado and Arkansas State Examples

Apply through Small Group Activities



# Introductions

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## Program Leader's Guide

Remove from activities that include other children

Remove in the short-term or limit the time a child attends the program

Dismiss a child permanently

Encourage families to voluntarily terminate services, "soft expulsion"

## Caring for Our Children

Terminating enrollment because of challenging behavior or health condition

Reductions in the amount of time in attendance at the setting

Other services are limited on the basis of challenging behaviors, e.g. denying outdoor time, withholding food, and using food as a reward or punishment

# Research Tells Us

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# Why

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Suspension and expulsion are stressful and negative experiences in themselves that can impact child outcomes

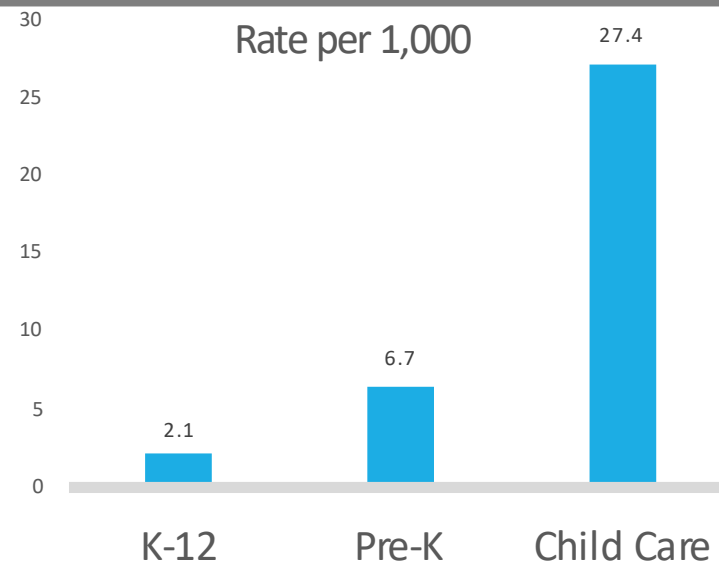
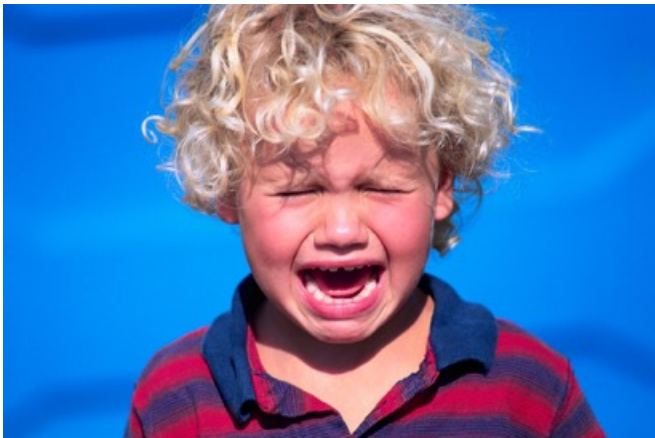
Expulsion or suspension early in a child's education predicts later expulsion or suspension in school

Young students who are expelled or suspended are as much as **10 times** more likely to:

- Drop out of high school
- Fail a grade
- Be incarcerated



# How Often



10.4% of Pre-K teachers expelled 1 or more in past year

Gilliam, WS & Shahar, G (2006). Preschool and child care expulsion and suspension: Rates and predictors in one state. *Infants and Young Children*, 19, 228-245.

Gilliam, WS (2005). Prekindergarteners left behind: Expulsion Rates in state prekindergarten programs. *FCD Policy Brief*, Series No. 3. Available: [www.ziglercenter.yale.edu/publications/briefs.html](http://www.ziglercenter.yale.edu/publications/briefs.html)

# Who

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Boys 3½ times more likely than girls

4-year-olds 50% more likely than 3-year-olds

Black children expelled at 2x the rate of White children;  
5x the rate of Asian children

Black children make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but  
48% of preschoolers suspended more than once

Latino and Black boys combined represented 46% of all  
boys in preschool, but 66% of all boys suspended

Girls who are Black, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander  
represent 30% or more of all out-of-school suspensions  
than girls who are White, Latina, and Asian

**Regardless of the  
study, there are  
significant  
disparities by race**

**These risks are  
multiplicative**

Gilliam, WS (2005). Prekindergartners left behind: Expulsion Rates in state prekindergarten programs  
Civil Rights Data Collection: Early Childhood Education – March 2014



# Infant Toddler

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A study in Chicago found that **42% of birth to three child care programs** expelled at least one child in the previous year because of behavior

A 2017 study in Philadelphia found that **26% of child care programs** had expelled at least one child in the past year and that **toddlers were just as likely as preschoolers** to be asked to leave the child care setting

# How do we understand the problem?

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## Our Point of View

Expulsion is not a child problem, this is about adult decisions

A solution focused on children and not changing anything about how we work with children and families will perpetuate current trends in expulsion rates

It is not a single-factor problem - requires a multi-pronged approach

Need to address the racial disparities in the earliest years



# Four Drivers of Expulsion to Consider

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# Driver 1: Structural Quality

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# What increases the likelihood of expulsion?

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- High teacher-child ratios
  - High teacher stress / Feeling hopeless
  - Private and faith-based child care
  - Long school day
  - Too little structure
  - Too restrictive structure
  - No consistent ongoing availability of a mental health consultant
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# Voices from the Field: Implication for Organizational Capacity

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- Programs unable to be reflective regarding their role in children's behavior
- Responding to other parents' reactions
- Afraid of losing staff who are hard to replace and need to maintain ratios, quality requirements, etc.
- Scared or do not like the child's parent(s)
- This training won't work with this child
- Belief that there must be a better program out there to meet this child's needs...

# Driver 2: Lack of Knowledge of Child Development

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## Knowledge of Child Development Needed


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Social-emotional development occurs in context of family, community and cultural expectations

Challenging behavior is a part of typical child development and offers “touch points”

Cross-cultural differences in children’s expression and interpretation of emotions, e.g. anger, shame, exuberance of positive emotions

Expulsion and suspension can pathologize child behavior and increase disparities





## Knowledge in Child Developed Needed

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Workforce needs knowledge and skills to

- Understand how children's emotional responses may reflect cultural expectations and learning
- Communicate classroom expectations in a child's first language
- Support social-emotional learning
- Examine their own cultural socialization and practices
- Distinguish concerning behaviors from developmentally appropriate behaviors

NSECE study found only 20% of providers reported receiving training on facilitating social-emotional growth in the past year



# Driver 3: Racial Disparities in Discipline

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# Understanding Racial Disparities in Discipline and Expulsion Rates

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Disproportionate levels of discipline by race

Mixed impact when background information on familial stressors is made available

At kindergarten entry, Black and White parents equally rated their children's persistence, approaches to learning, and social interactions, but teachers rated Black students as having a distinct disadvantage relative to White students

Underprepared early learning teachers are more likely to use punitive and rejecting disciplinary techniques



# Bias as One Explanation for Racial Disparities

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## Above the Surface:

**Conscious/Reflective** effortful, slow, logical, calculating, limited resources

## Below the Surface:

**Unconscious/Reflex** automatic, fast, intuitively-driven, emotional stereotypic, large resources



# Bias as One Explanation for Racial Disparities

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<https://nyti.ms/2jSAhZe>

# Other Related Explanations

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Cultural discontinuity

Negotiating conflict cross-culturally

Goodness-of-fit

Lower expectations

Perception of threat

“Protection” from harsh world / preparation for bias

Explicit bias



## Driver 4: Trauma Behavior Connection

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Approximately 10 to 14 percent of children from birth to age 5 experience emotional, relational, or behavioral disturbance

Children experiencing trauma arrive at school less ready to learn

Exposure to violence can diminish concentration, memory, organizational, and language abilities

Quality of early learning settings is *even more* important

## Why does this feel complex?

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Subjectivity in what behavior is considered challenging

Many types of exclusionary practices

Program characteristics may provoke or contribute to children's behaviors

Increased understanding of why racial disparities exist

Lack of supports for an underprepared workforce





How do we know if our strategy is reducing and preventing exclusionary practices?

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## *To answer this question...*

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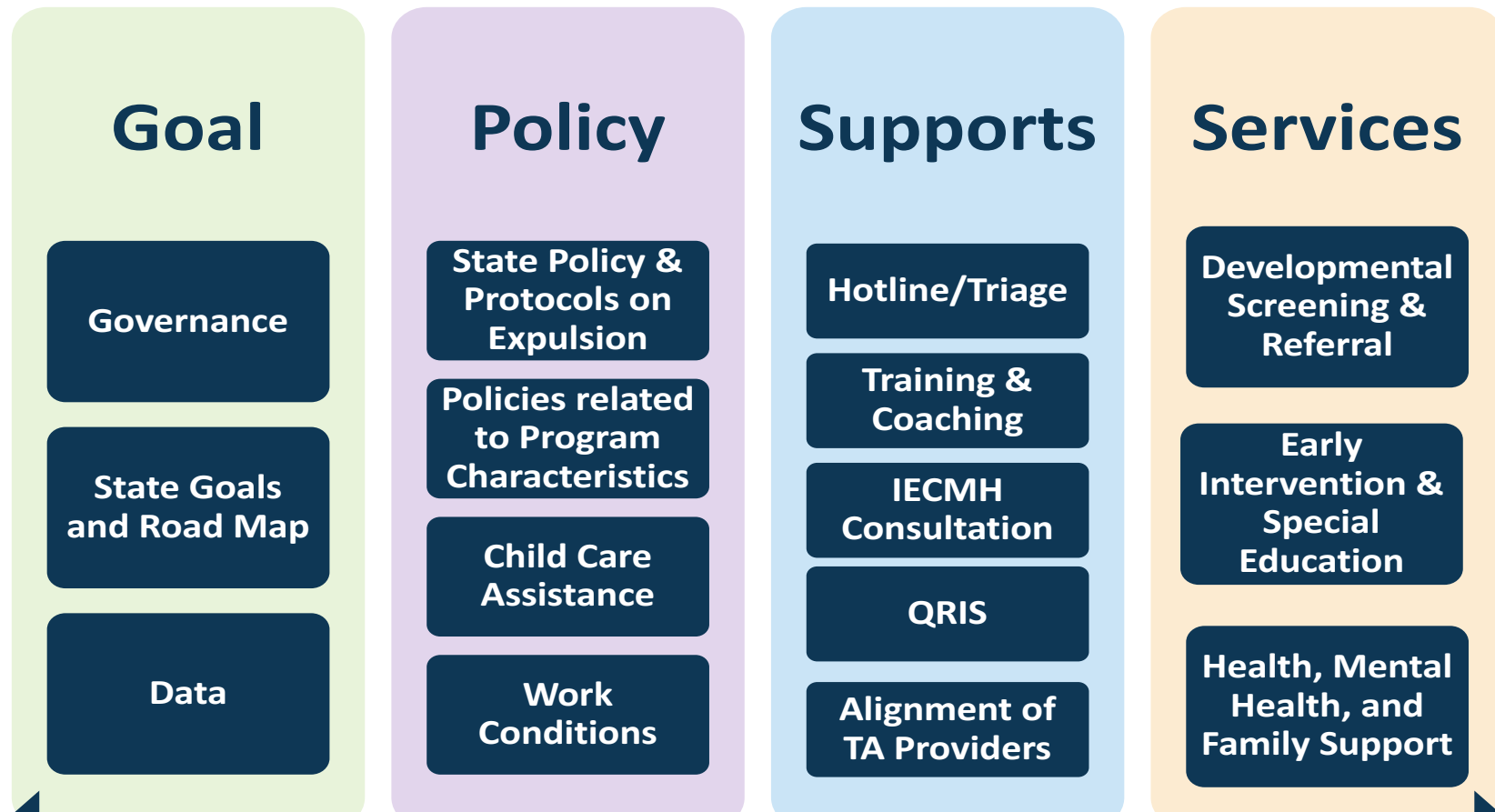
Consider the policy options for a state strategy

Explore the “4 P’s” of Data

Learn from Colorado and Arkansas




# POSSIBLE COMPONENTS OF A STATE STRATEGY



**Cross-cutting: Family Partnerships and Racial & Gender Equity**

# What impact are we trying to measure?

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- Shifting attitudes from “the child is doing something wrong...” to “what is the child’s behavior trying to tell me?”
  - Changing adults to ask: What is my role? What is being triggered in me? What could I be doing differently? Where can I get additional help and reflections?
  - Measuring changes in adult and child behavior.
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# Types of Data

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**Prevalence**

**Program**

**Process**

**Progress**



# Prevalence

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## Establishing a baseline to measure change

### Identifying trends

- ***Children characteristics***: race, gender, age, home language, disability, behaviors of concern, etc.
- ***Program characteristics***: type of program, ratios, class/group size, length of program day, QRIS rating, participation in PD, access ECMH consultation, staff well-being and work conditions, etc.

### Addressing soft expulsion

- Implication for how you ask about exclusionary practices
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## Program

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Developmentally appropriate practices, e.g. schedule, routines, transitions, learning centers, toys, curriculum, building relationships

Teaching social-emotional skills and responding to common challenging behaviors

Staff feeling supported and competent in responding to children

Supporting children with more significant concerns



## Process


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What support was delivered

Who delivered the support

To whom they delivered the support

For example

- # of referrals
  - Where referral came from
  - Who were they assigned
  - Status of case completion
  - Dose of intervention (type and how long, etc.).
- 



# Progress

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## **Program & staff outcomes**

- Changes in program policies and practices
- Changes in staff/teacher knowledge and skills
- Changes in staff/teacher well-being, satisfaction
- Extent of communication and partnerships with families
- Supporting children in program

## **Child & family outcomes**

- Changes in social emotional knowledge and skills
- Changes in presenting behaviors
- Connections to additional supports
- If transitioned out of the program, changes in type or quality of care

## **Improve effectiveness of supports over time**



# Introduction to Colorado

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## Colorado's long approach to social emotional support for young children in child care

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# Colorado's effort and course of action

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**2016:** Child Care Rule Revisions were adopted

How providers are supported to improve practices around social emotional development

Methods and approaches to reducing suspensions & expulsion

Improving partnerships with families when children present with challenging behaviors.

★ Pushback from providers during public comment on collecting real-time data on expulsions

## Exact Rule Language in the Policies and Procedures Section

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### **“Providers must:**

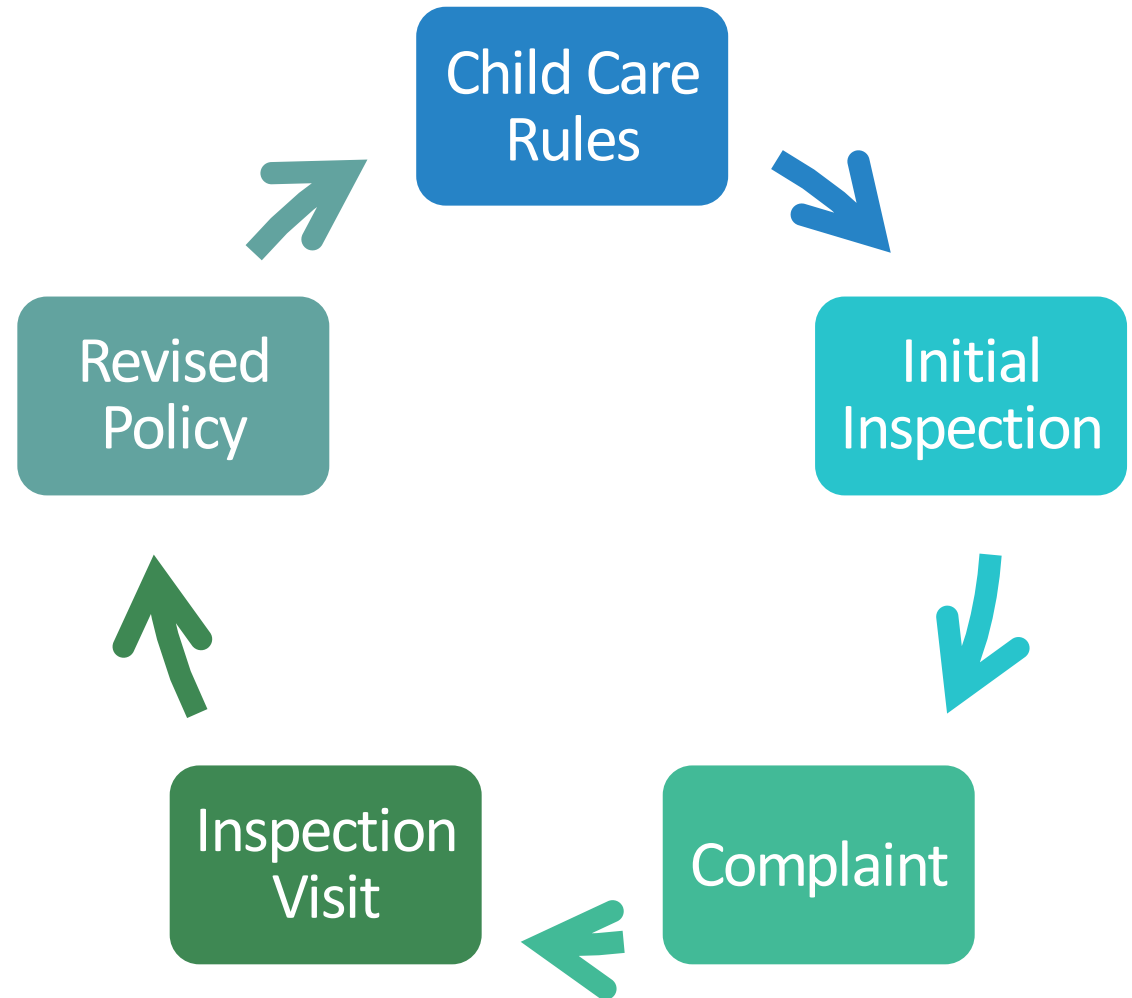
- Cultivate positive child, staff, family relationships,
- Create and maintain a socially & emotionally respectful care environment,
- Implement teaching strategies to support positive behavior and S/E competence,
- Convene a team based approach to reducing challenging behaviors and preventing suspensions & expulsion
- Demonstrate access to ECMH consultant or other specialist as needed.”



**COLORADO**  
Office of Early Childhood  
Department of Human Services

## What the licensing unit tell us:

- Grateful for the attention to S/E, but we don't know how to advise
- Inspectors may not be up to date on latest science of attachment, trauma, support
- Questions about remediation of violation: what's in a good plan?



# State system support

Long history of early childhood mental health consultation in Colorado

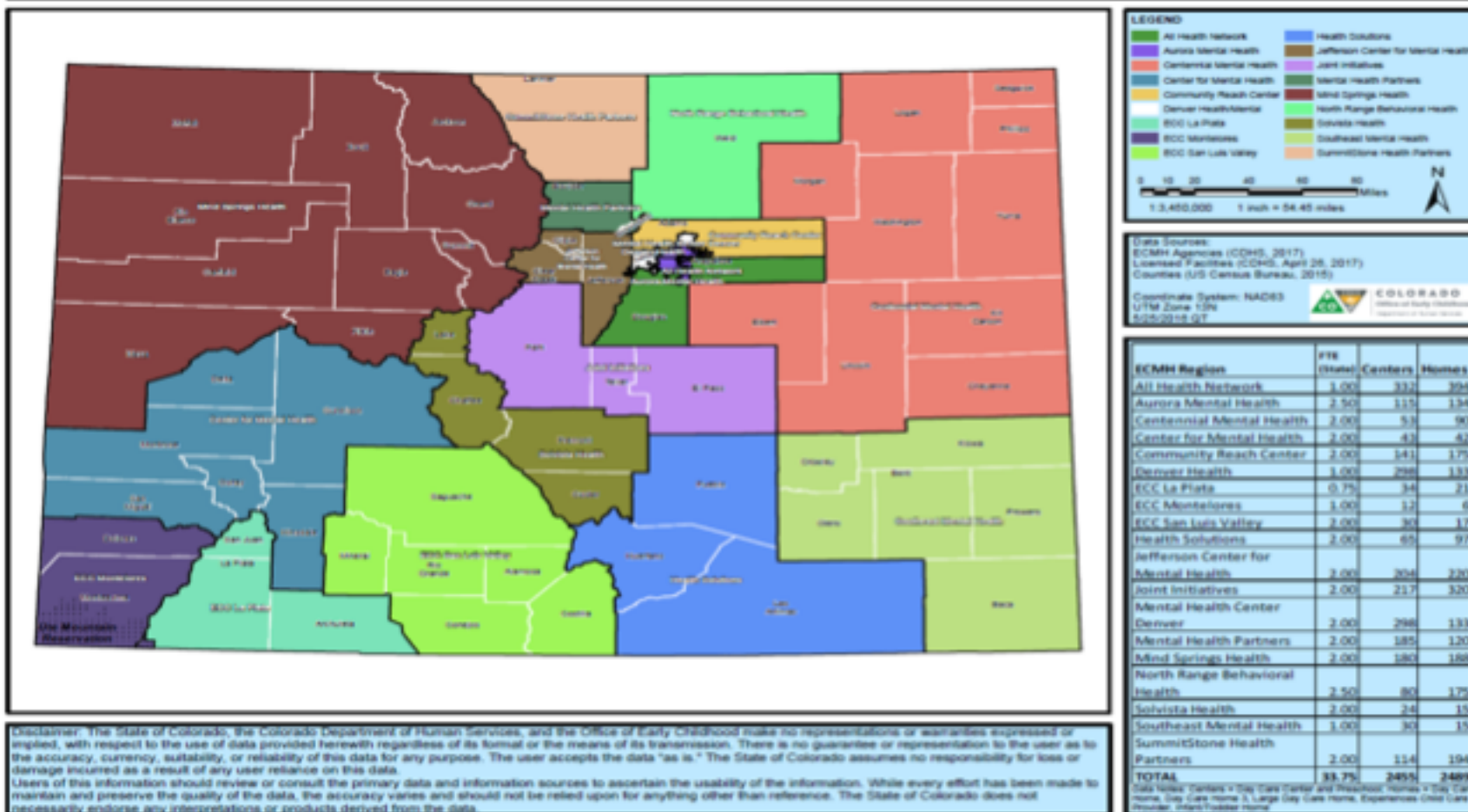


- Pilots first legislated in 1997
  - Early evaluation focus on the concept of expulsions
- 2006 State funded (general funds) for 17 FTE
- Kid Connects: Boulder, CO
  - *What Works 2008*
  - Early evaluation interest on ecmhc to mitigate risk of expulsion



COLORADO  
Office of Early Childhood  
Department of Human Services

## ECMH Specialist's Regions (April 2017)





# Capitalizing on National Momentum

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Granted legislative spending authority for CCDF to double the size of our state's consultation program to **34 FTE**



# Colorado's Planned Data Collection

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## Prevalence

- Age, Gender, Race
- QRIS rating
- Reason for referral
- \*Suspension /expulsion survey

## Program

- Baseline CHILD© to inform practice

## Process

- Utilizations including time spent in classrooms, activities
- Referral Source
- Case closure

## Progress

- Pre-post assessments of:
  - CHILD©
  - DECA
  - Risk of expulsion
- Expulsion Outcome

# Introduction to Arkansas

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# Arkansas's Efforts to Reduce Suspension and Expulsion

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Plan development

Roll-out of new policy and 'BehaviorHelp' triage and support system

Experience/data/lessons learned to date



# Arkansas Expulsion and Suspension Workgroup

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Influenced by federal guidance

Multi-disciplinary Workgroup

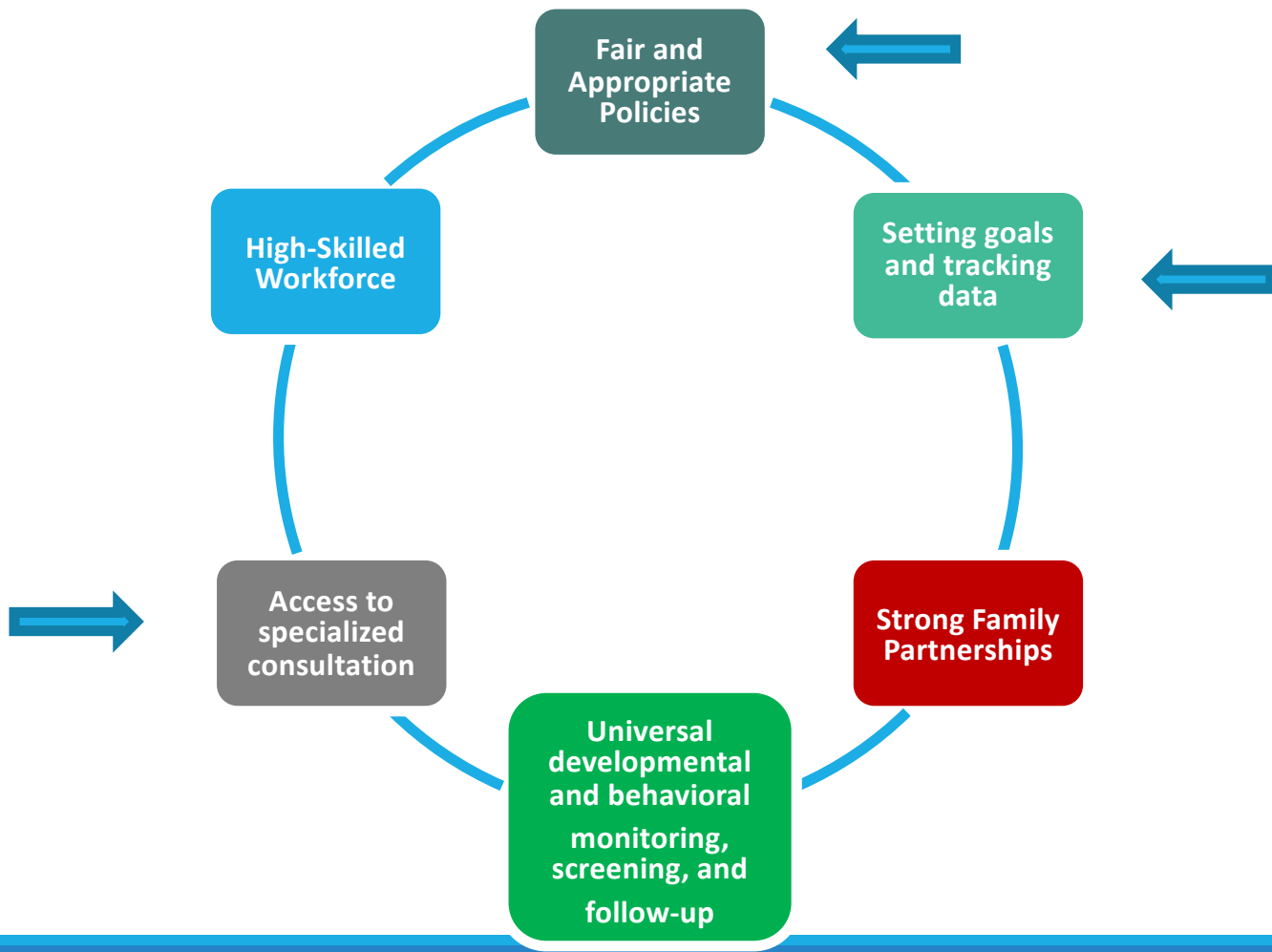
First meeting held on January 7, 2015.

Internal to DHS/DCCECE:

- Licensing
- QRIS
- State-funded Pre-K Program
- CCDF Unit/Family Support

External Partners:

- DHS Division of Behavioral Health
  - Professional Development Contractors (trainers, TA, ECMHC)
  - Experienced ECE Professionals
  - Special Education
  - Head Start Collaboration
  - Project Launch
- 





# New Policies & Supports

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Longstanding DHS/DCCECE policy limits suspension and expulsion for children enrolled in state pre-k programs

- “No child shall be expelled without permission from the DCCECE”
- New monitoring and support efforts started in 2015; expanded in 2016

Similar policy rolled out July 1, 2016 for programs receiving child care vouchers

Informed by the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children



Source: Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning,  
[www.vanderbilt.csefel.edu](http://www.vanderbilt.csefel.edu)



# You Can't Ask for What You Don't Know You Need

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## Challenges:

- Perception that the 'problem' lies within the child
- Little understanding of connection between behavior and child's experiences/environment
- Belief that \_\_\_\_\_ won't work with THIS child

Identified need for single point of entry and on-site support



# Identifying Providers of Specialized Supports

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Who is going on-site that knows about:

- Developmentally appropriate practice
- Teaching social-emotional skills
- Responding to common behavioral challenges
- Supporting children and families with more significant behavioral and emotional concerns

Identified TA providers and ECMH Consultants



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graph BT; A[Provider/Parent complete online form and interview with DCCECE staff] --> B[Tier 1: Concerns described sound developmentally normal and frustration is not excessively high; DCCECE Specialists share information and resources]; B --> C[Tier 2: Behavior described as more serious and/or teacher frustration is high; Short term TA by team of experts in developmentally appropriate practice and/or social-emotional supports]; C --> D[Tier 3: Behavior frequent and extreme and/or identified trauma history or multi-system involvement; Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation]; D --> E[Development of Individualized Teacher Training Plan As Needed];
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Development of Individualized Teacher Training Plan As Needed

**Tier 3: Behavior frequent and extreme and/or identified trauma history or multi-system involvement;  
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation**

**Tier 2: Behavior described as more serious and/or teacher frustration is high;  
Short term TA by team of experts in developmentally appropriate practice and/or social-emotional supports**

**Tier 1: Concerns described sound developmentally normal and frustration is not excessively high;  
DCCECE Specialists share information and resources**

**Provider/Parent complete online form and interview with DCCECE staff**

## Development of Individualized Teacher Training Plan As Needed



# Triage Specialists

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Staff of the DHS/Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

All have other roles (family support, pre-k specialist, etc.)

Receive online requests for support and complete structured phone interview

Provide support or assign to TA or ECMHC

Attend weekly staffing with TA and ECMHC leadership

# Data Gathering in Triage

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What do we know about the **center** (licensing history, QRIS rating, type of center)?

What do we know about the **teacher** (training, experience, how long with child, etc.)?

**What else** are we hearing (frustration level, 'red flags' related to behavior management, etc.)?

What is known about the **child/family** (child care history, behavior, difficult experiences, etc.)



# Technical Assistance

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Provided by professional with experience in developmentally appropriate practice and strategies to support social-emotional development

Services are flexible and short-term (usually 2-10 visits)

Focused on building skills of teacher and creating a more supportive classroom environment

# Mental Health Consultation



Provided by licensed mental health professional

Visits occur 1 to 2 times per week for 3 months

- Meet with parent/teacher/director
- Observe and assess child in the classroom setting.
- With teacher, develop individual child behavior and classroom management plans.
- Screenings and referrals for community resources for child/family.
- Support teacher in implementation of support plan.
- Provide support for the well-being of the teacher/director

# Planned Data Collection

Prevalence	Program	Process	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surveys on suspension and expulsion practices</li><li>• Surveys on challenging behavior in classrooms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TPOT</li><li>• Case closure consultant feedback</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilization by child and center demographics</li><li>• Referral type</li><li>• Service records</li><li>• Teacher experience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher satisfaction</li><li>• Expulsion outcome</li><li>• Pre-post assessment of behavior</li><li>• Consultant perception of progress</li></ul>



# First Activity

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# Debrief Activity

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# Break

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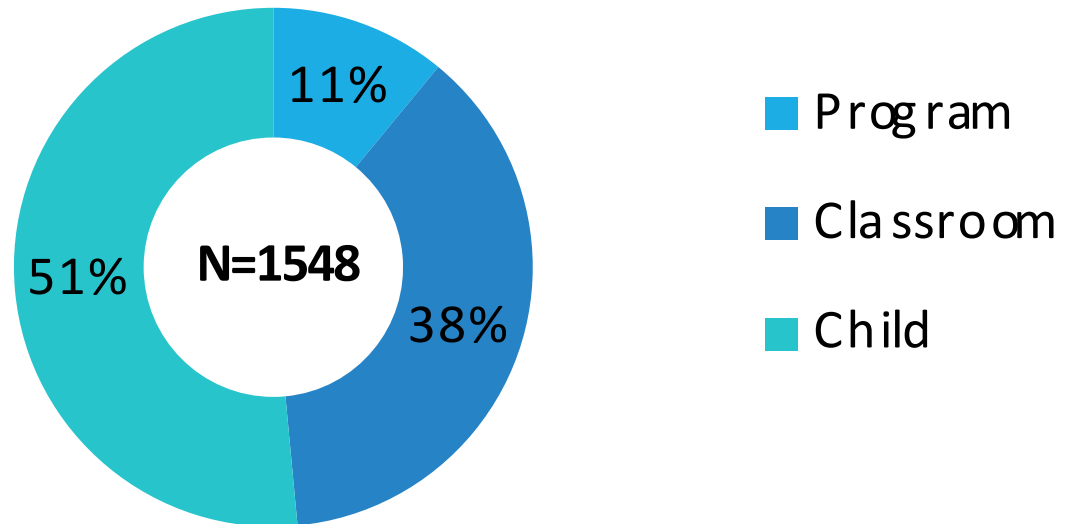


Where is Colorado's  
story today?

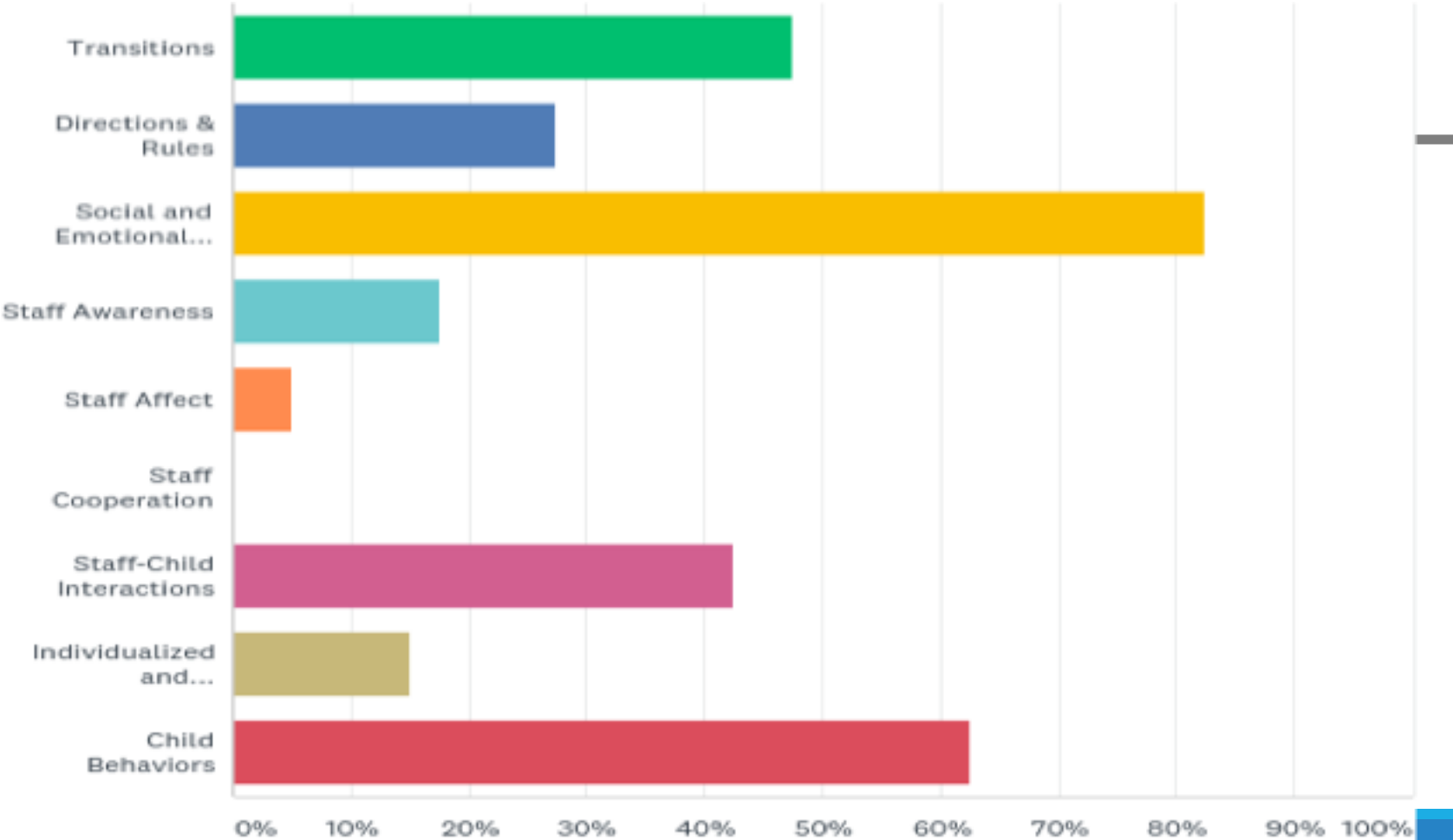
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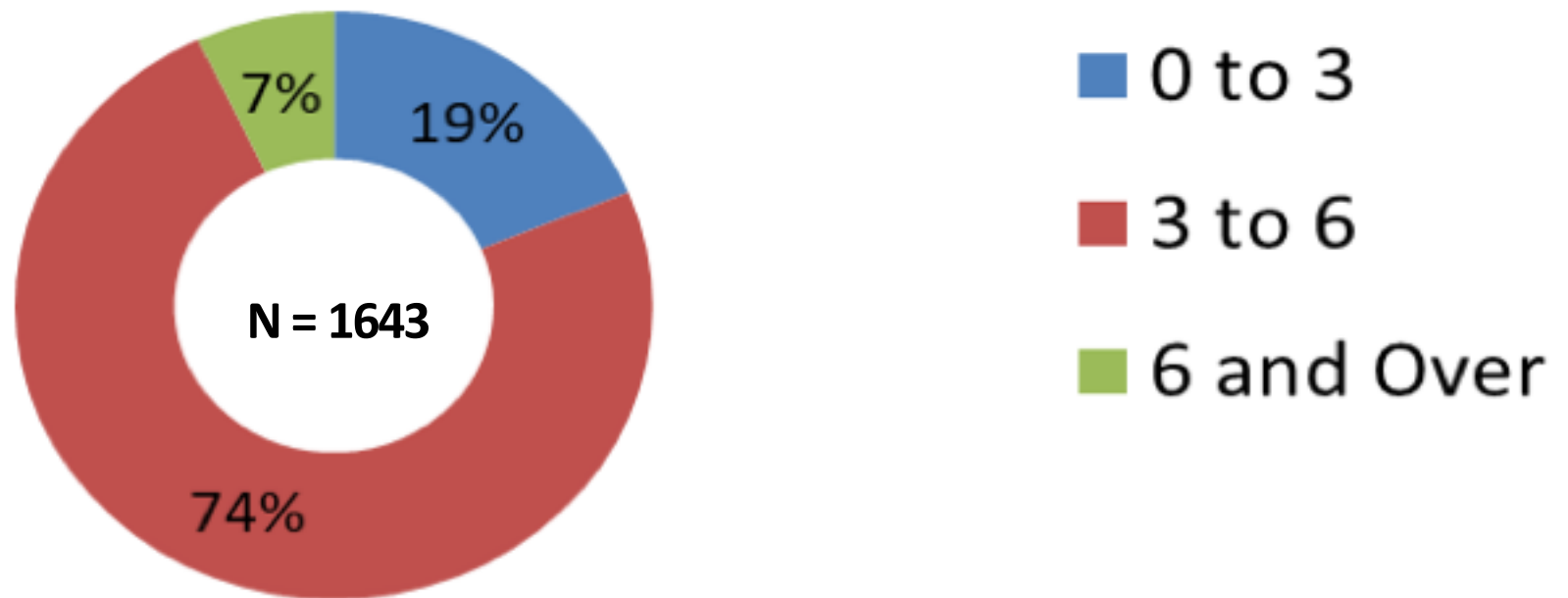
## ECMH Consultation by Level of Focus



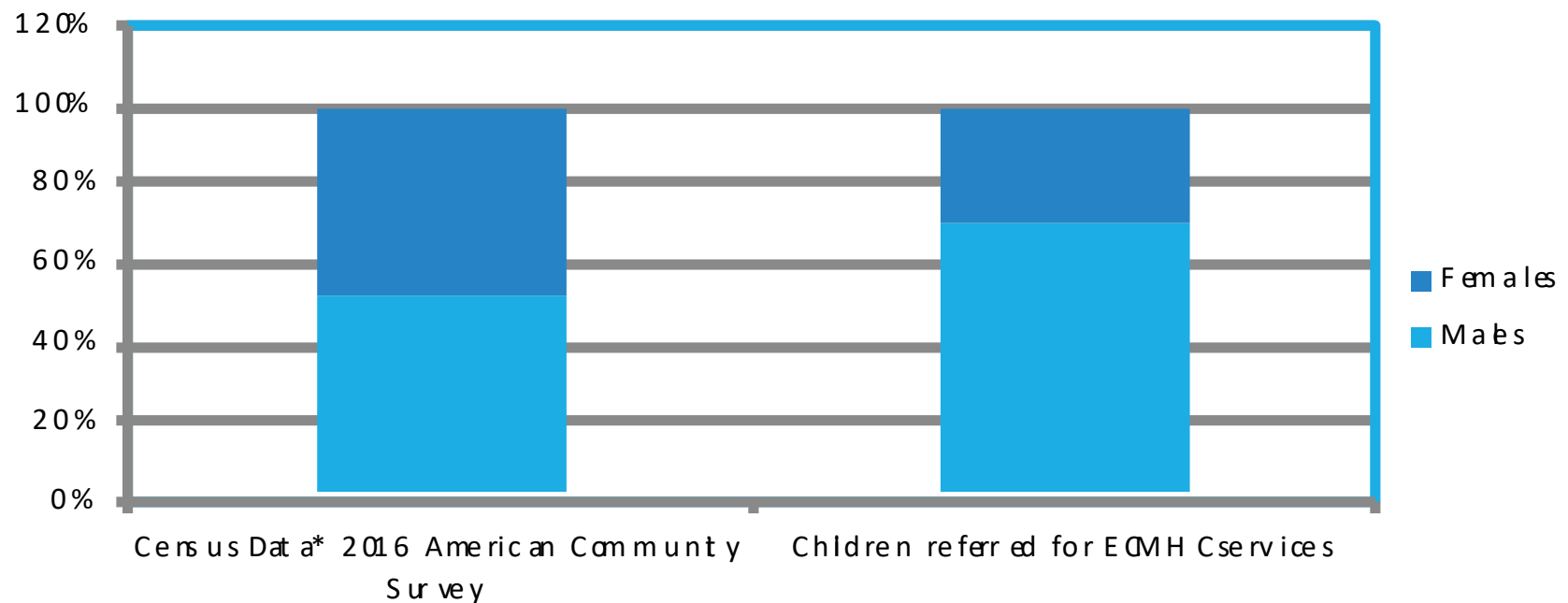
# Top Themes of Consultation Focus based on PreK CHILD© Results



## Number of EMCH child-focused cases by age group

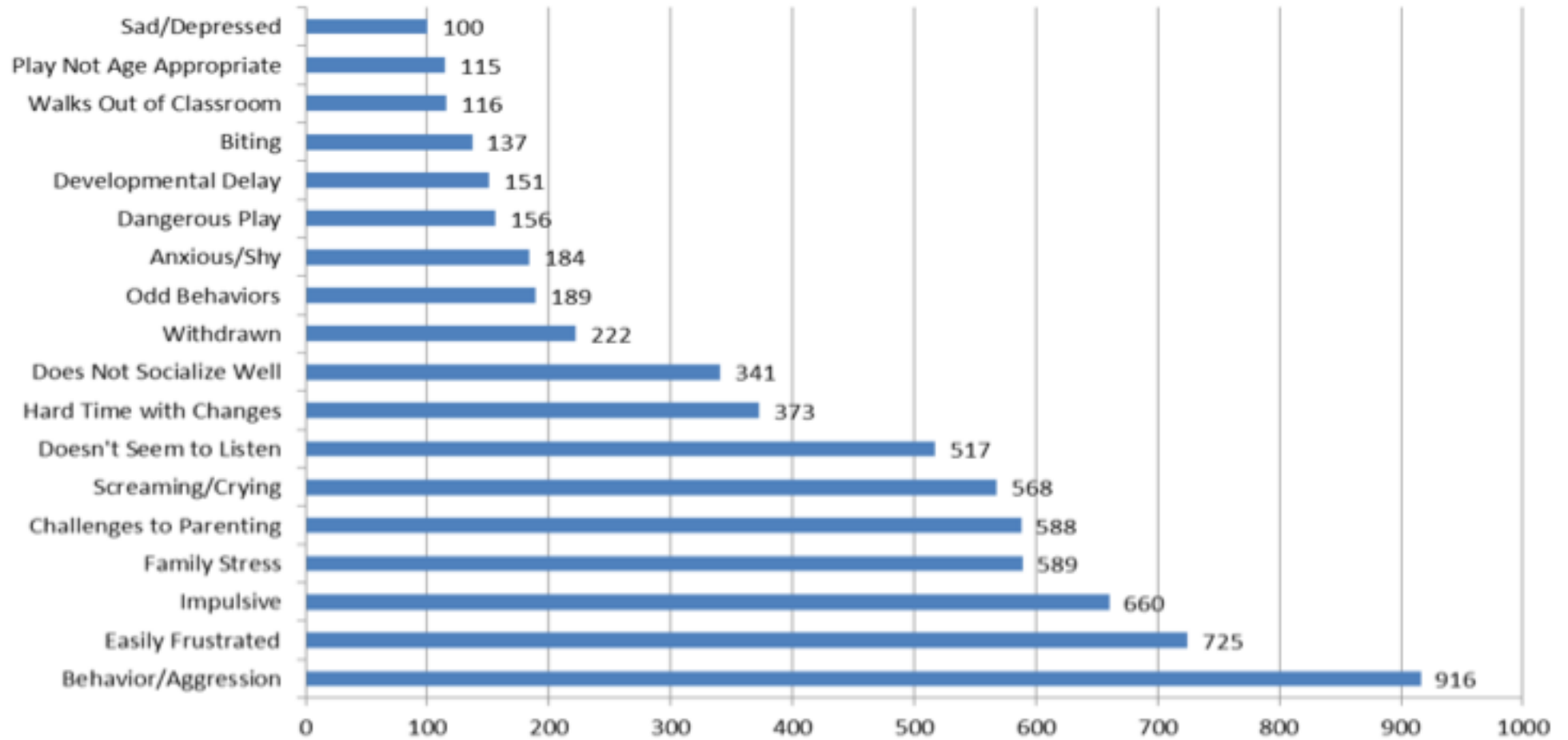


# Gender of CO children

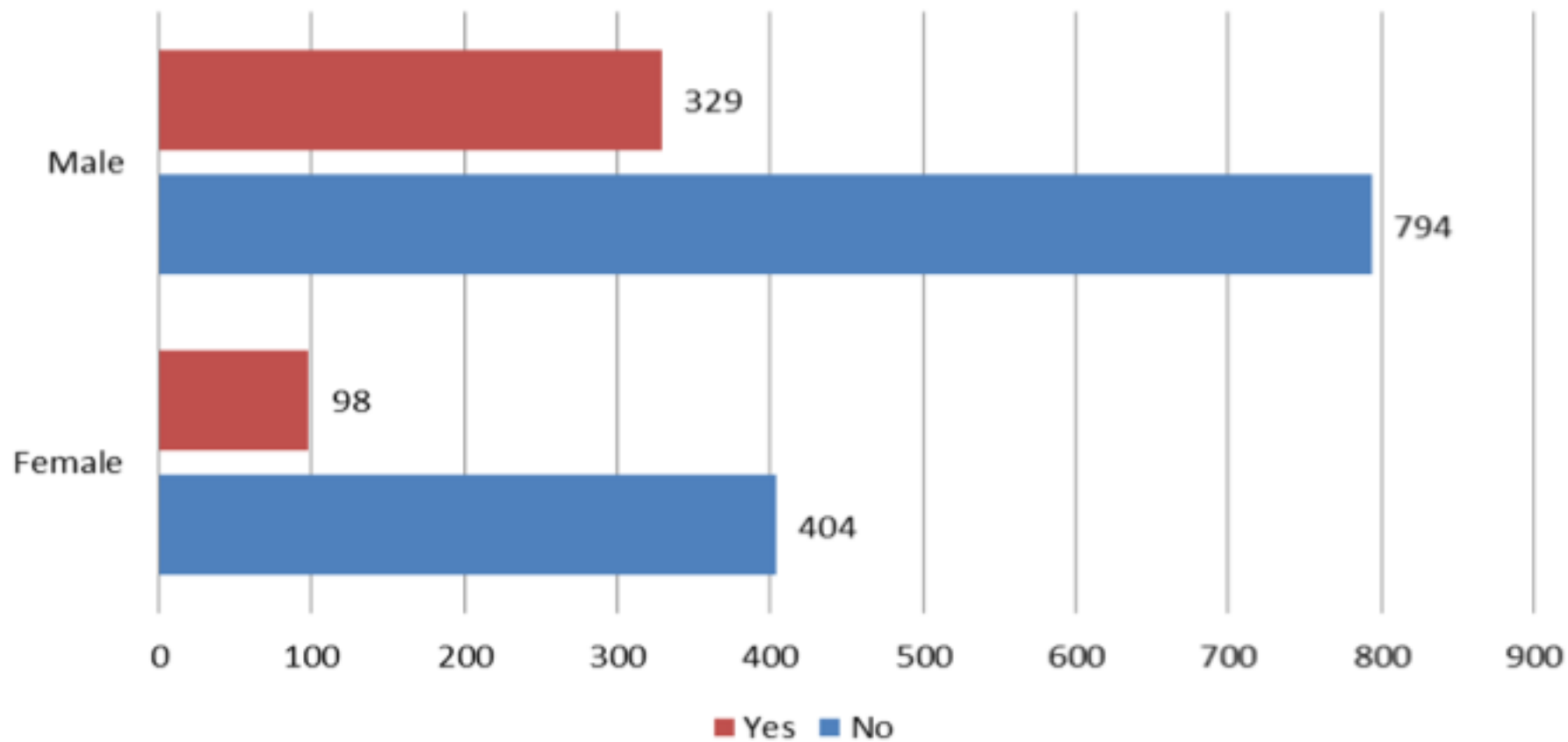




## Reasons Listed for Referral

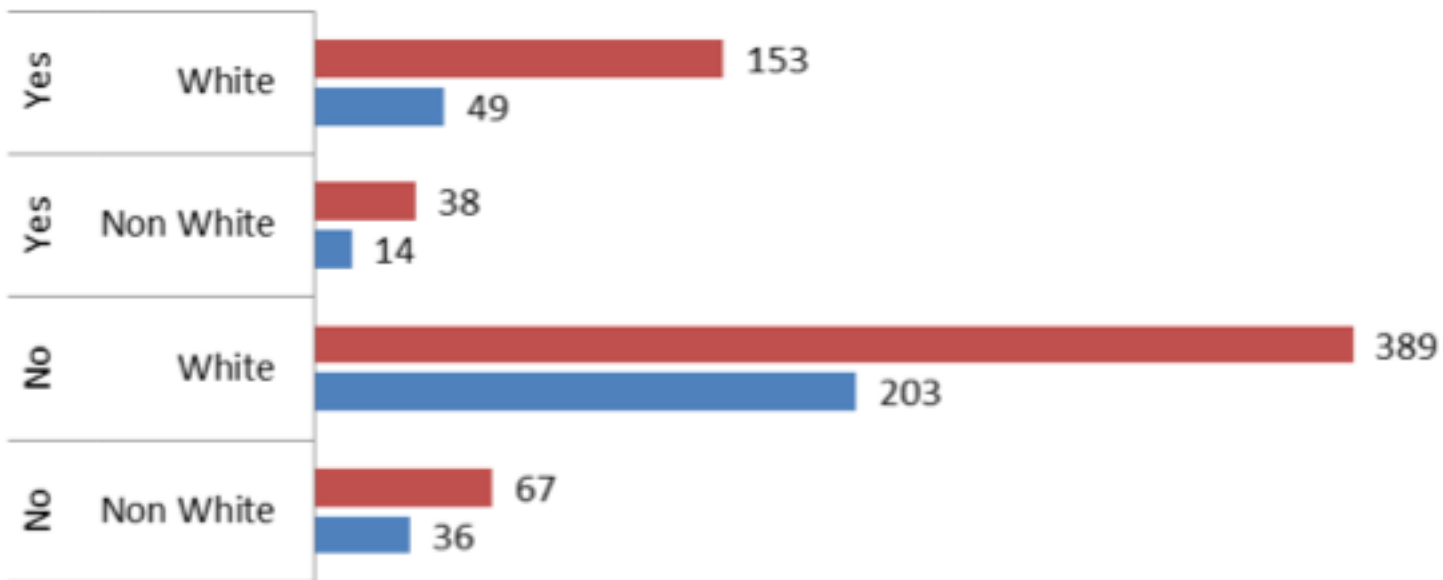


## At Risk of Expulsion on Entry by Gender

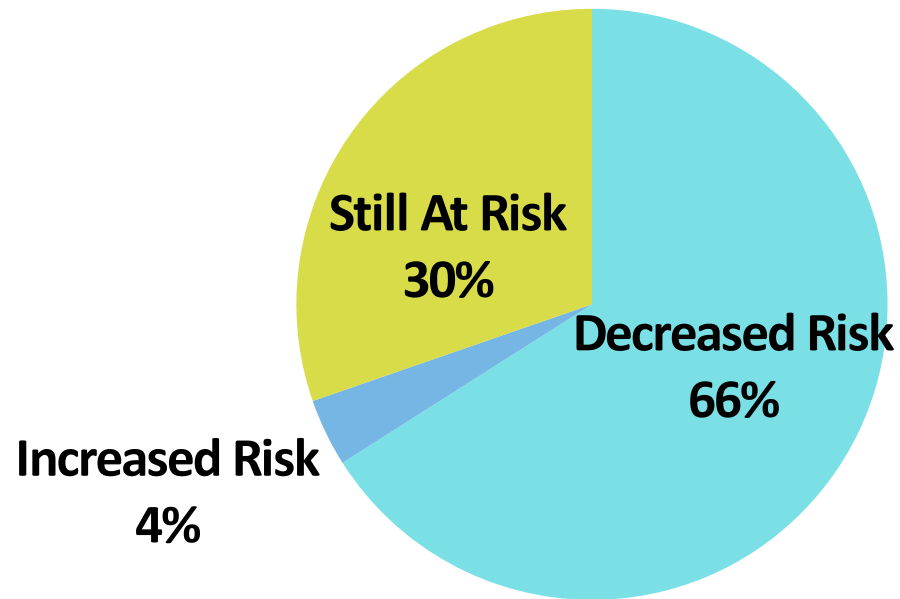


## At Risk on Entry by Gender by White / Non White

Male Female



## Change in Risk Status for those at Risk of Expulsion on Entry



# How CO uses the data?

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**Prevalence:** We will use expulsion survey data to establish baseline rates and eventually look changes in rates

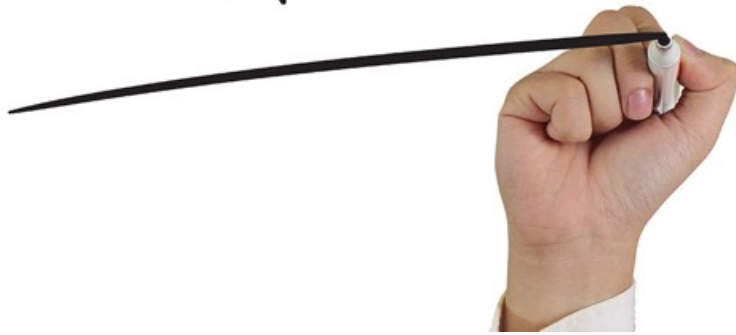
**Program:** Informing training needs for providers based on trends in classrooms assessments

**Process:** Looks at utilizations, activities. Have used data from the last 18 months to establish a model for CO's ECMHC

**Progress:** Making the case for continued and expanded investments for ECMHC. This is important for both public and private funds.



# LIMITATION



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Race & ethnicity of children, staff & parents


Suspensions- How to quantify?

Differential adherence to child care rules:

- ( i.e.:What does access to a mental health consultant really mean?)

## The next horizon for CO's data system

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- Adding a “Close date” for services 😊
  - Data analysis reports: what do utilizations tell us about impact and change (dosage & intensity)
  - What works for who under what conditions?
  - Capturing missing time away from work / school for parents ( important 2gen factor)
  - Info on tie to licensing policies
- 

## Key activities just underway:

Administering CO  
Suspension &  
Expulsion mixed  
methods study

Working with  
licensing to  
develop guidance  
to use on initial  
visits to guide  
policy planning

Requiring  
course on  
*Impact of Bias*  
for all CO  
consultants



Where is Arkansas story  
today?


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# BehaviorHelp

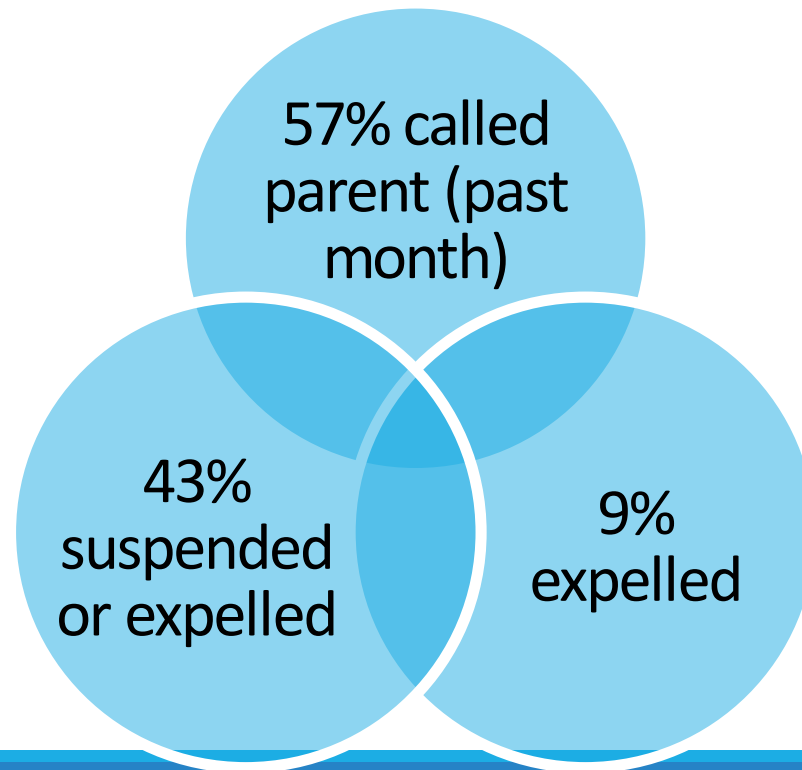
**Data and Lessons Learned  
July, 2016 – June 2018**

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# Prevalence of Problem

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# Program data

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Opportunities to Strengthen Supportive Practice	Percent of Classrooms
Transitions are chaotic	65%
No posted/illustrated rules or expectations	62%
Emotions are never or rarely discussed in classroom	56%
No visual schedule	54%
Teachers never or rarely support children in managing anger	39%
Teacher never or rarely support children in learning to solve problems	39%
Teachers never or rarely join in children's play	27%

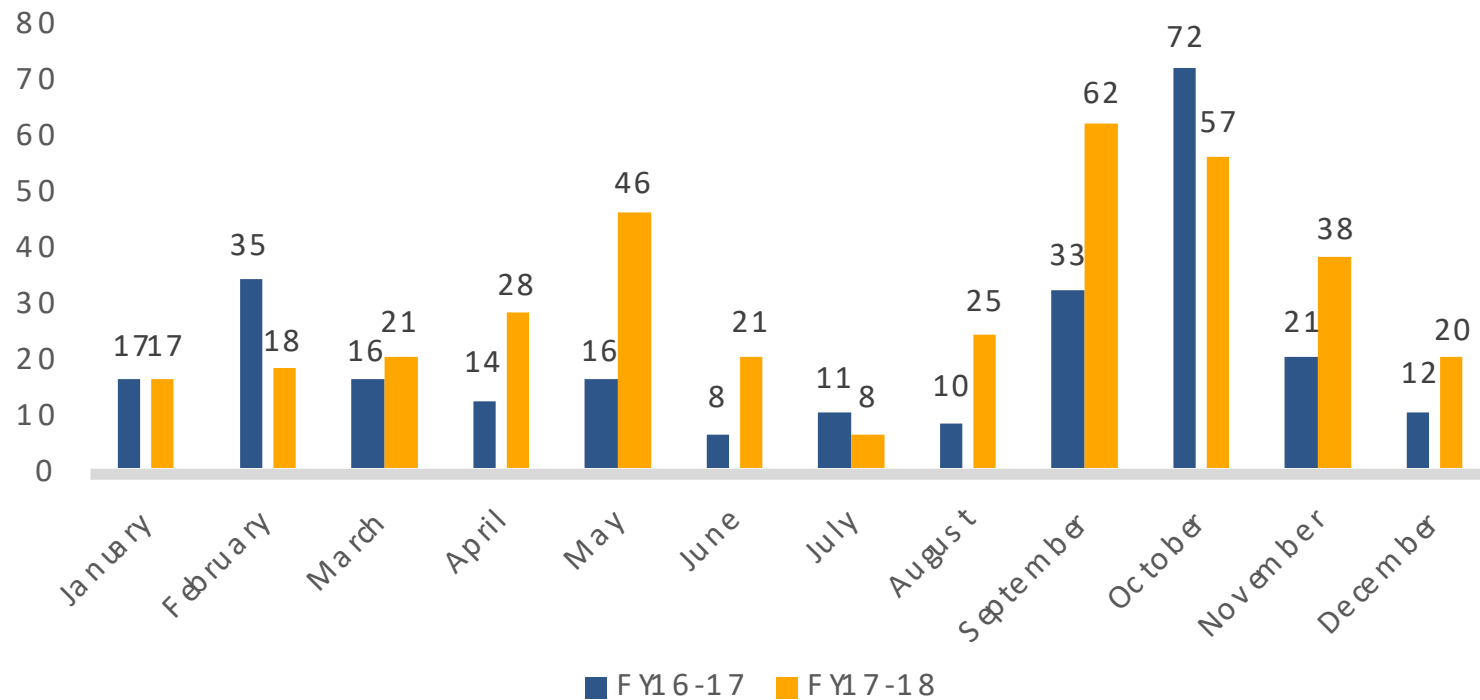
# Process Data

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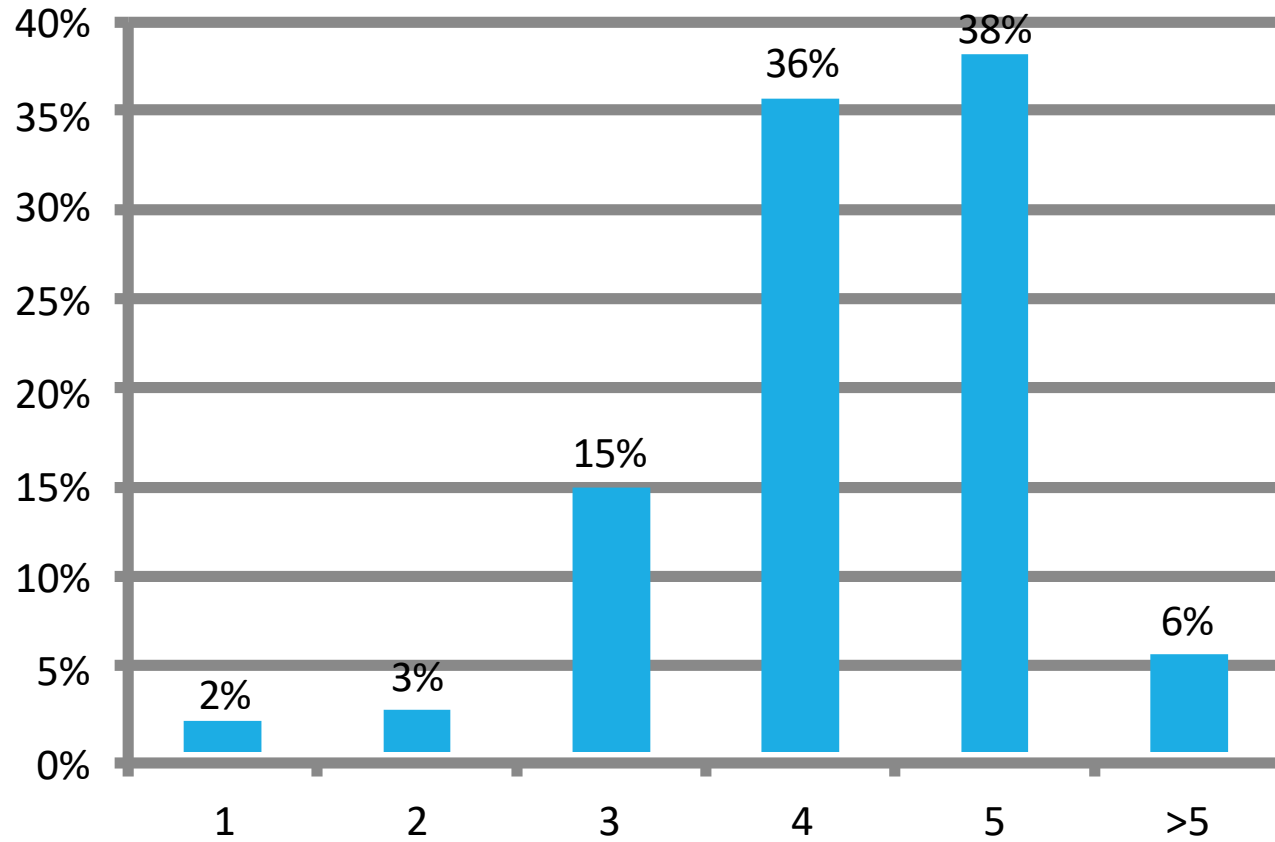


# BehaviorHelp Referrals by Month (n = 626)

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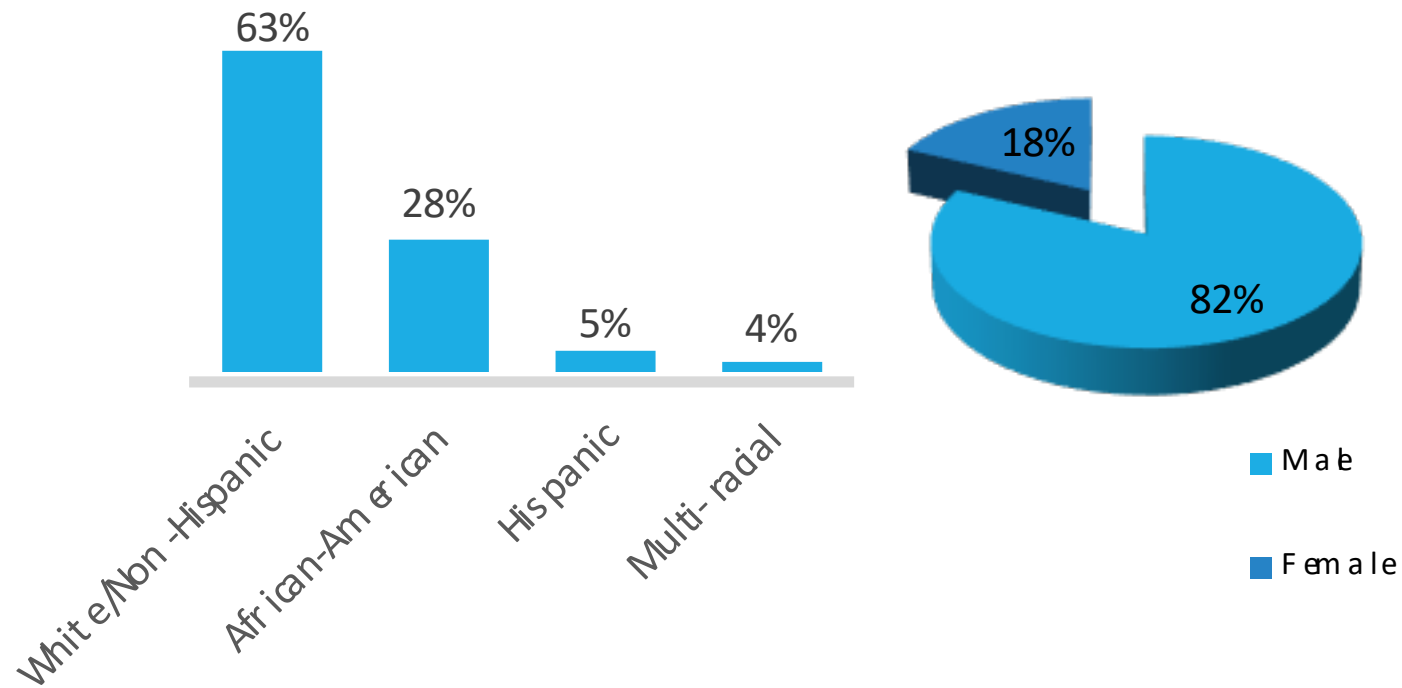
## BEHAVIORHELP REFERRALS BY AGE



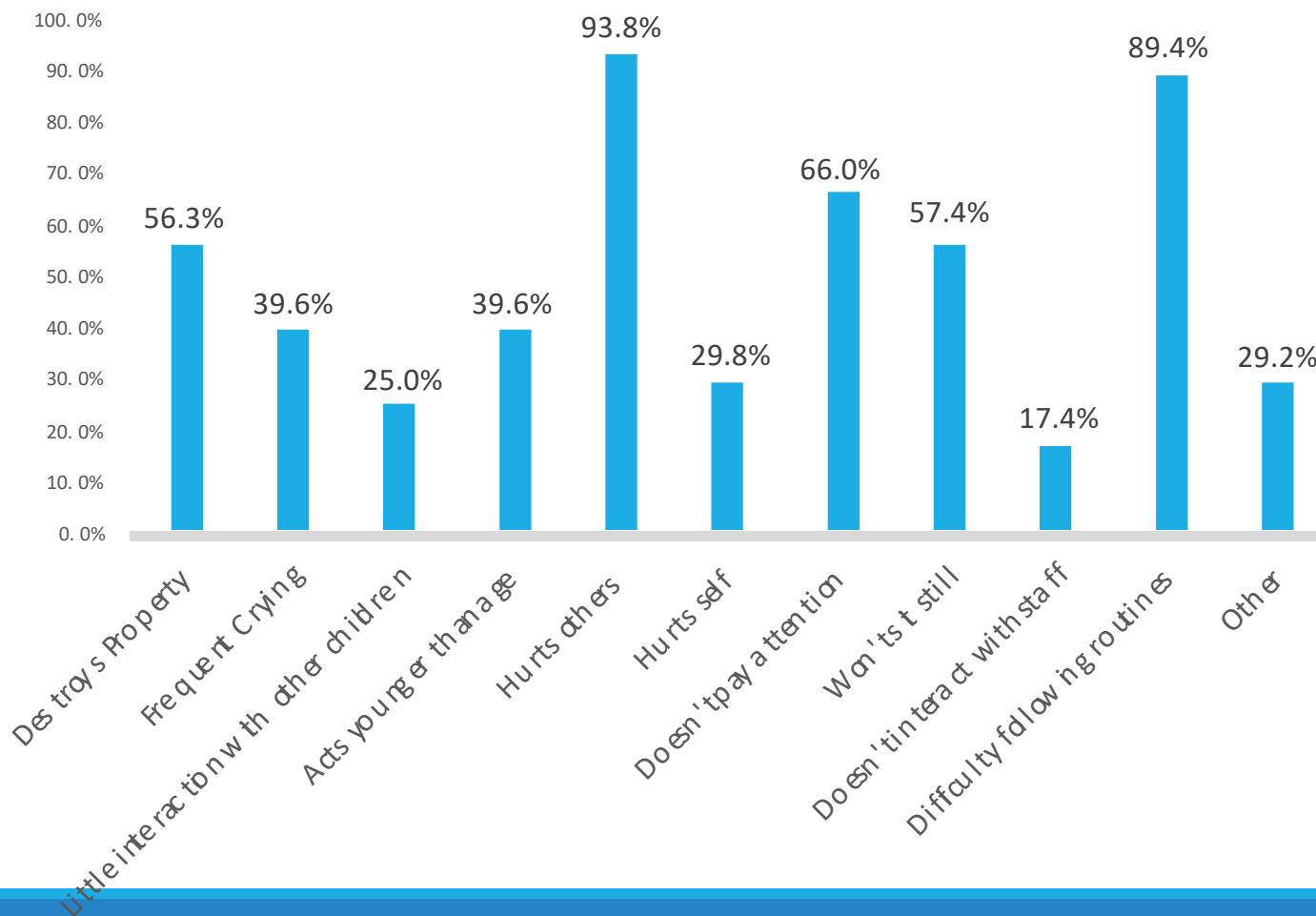


# White Males Majority of Those Referred

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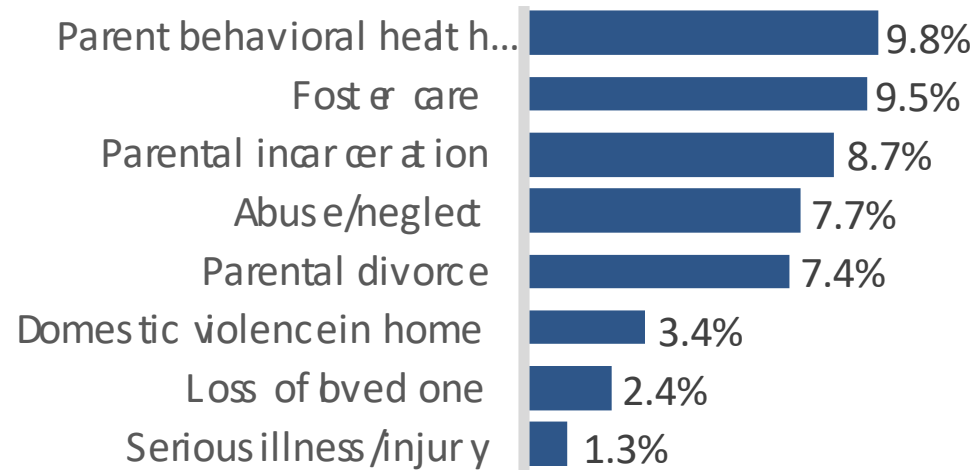
# Behavior Description



# Trauma



37% known at intake  
52% known by case  
closure

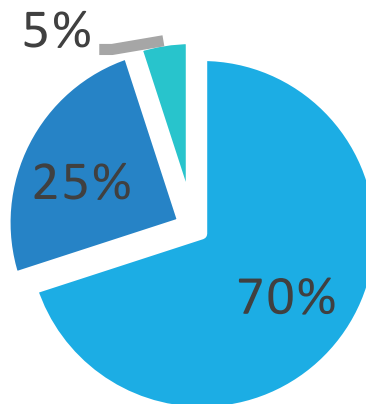


0%

10%

# BehaviorHelp Triage

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- Technical Assistance
- Mental Health Consultation
- Both



93%

- Teacher *received help in a reasonable amount of time* after making Help Request



81%

- Teacher feels *better able to manage behavior concerns* because of support received.

91%

- BehaviorHelp staff *respected teacher's knowledge/opinions.*

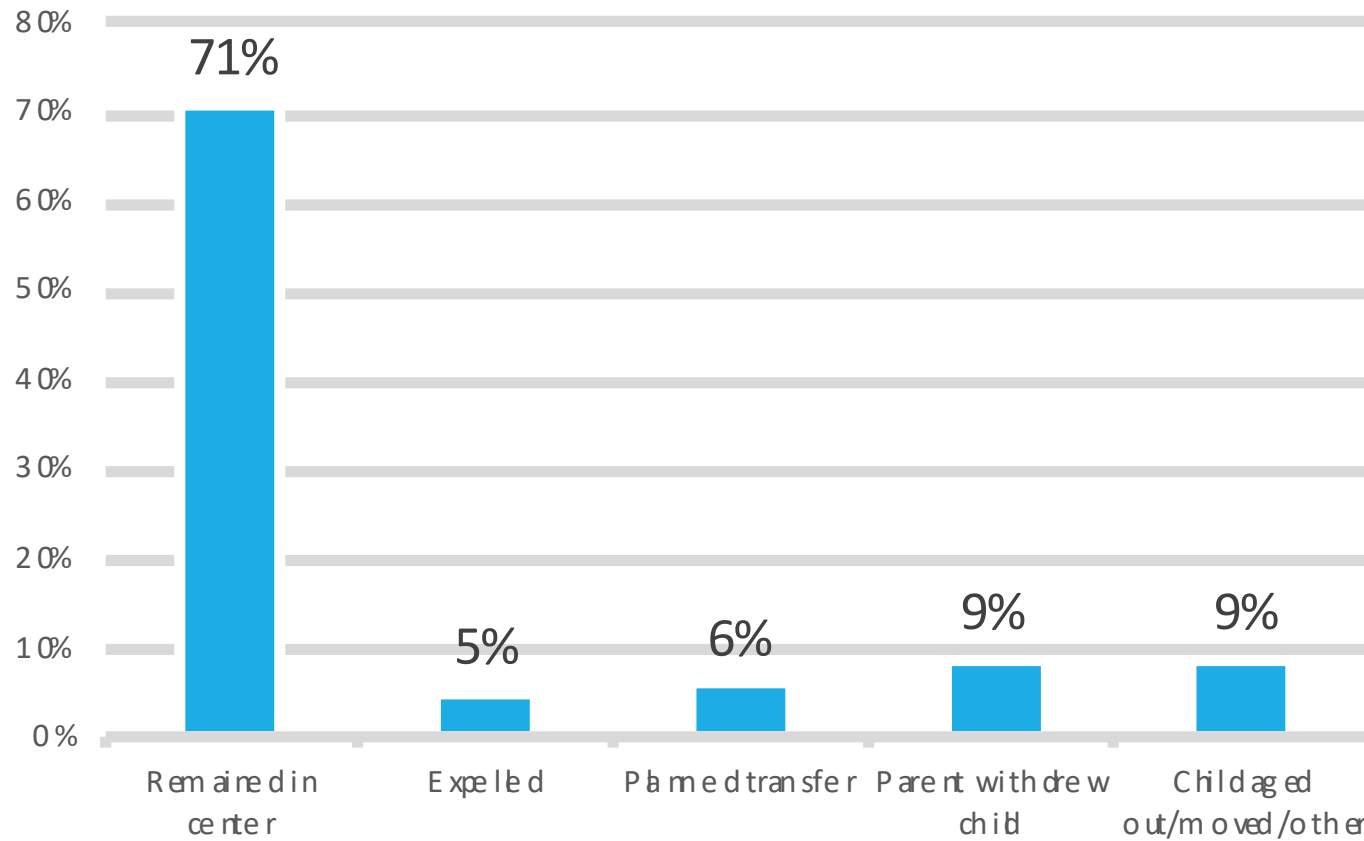


# Progress Data

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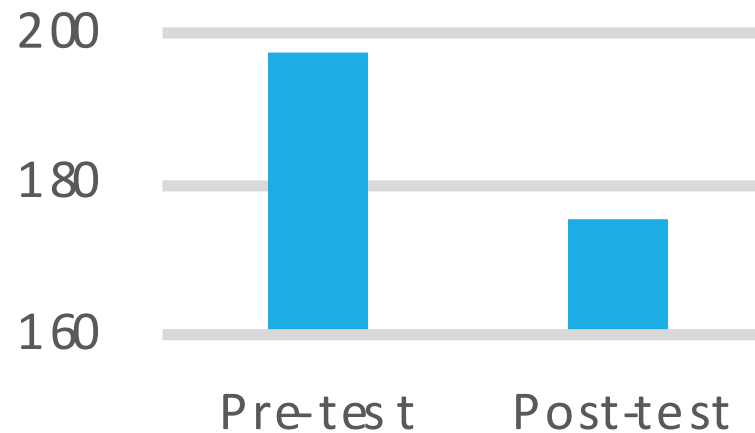
# Case Closed!



# 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





*I would describe my partnership with the BehaviorHelp team as rewarding and educational. My coach helped me with ideas for the classroom, ways to communicate with my parents, and she showed me some techniques I used personally. I would recommend the BehaviorHelp team to any of my colleagues.*

Participants said they would **use BehaviorHelp again** and would **recommend BehaviorHelp** to other teachers.



# How We Are Using the Data

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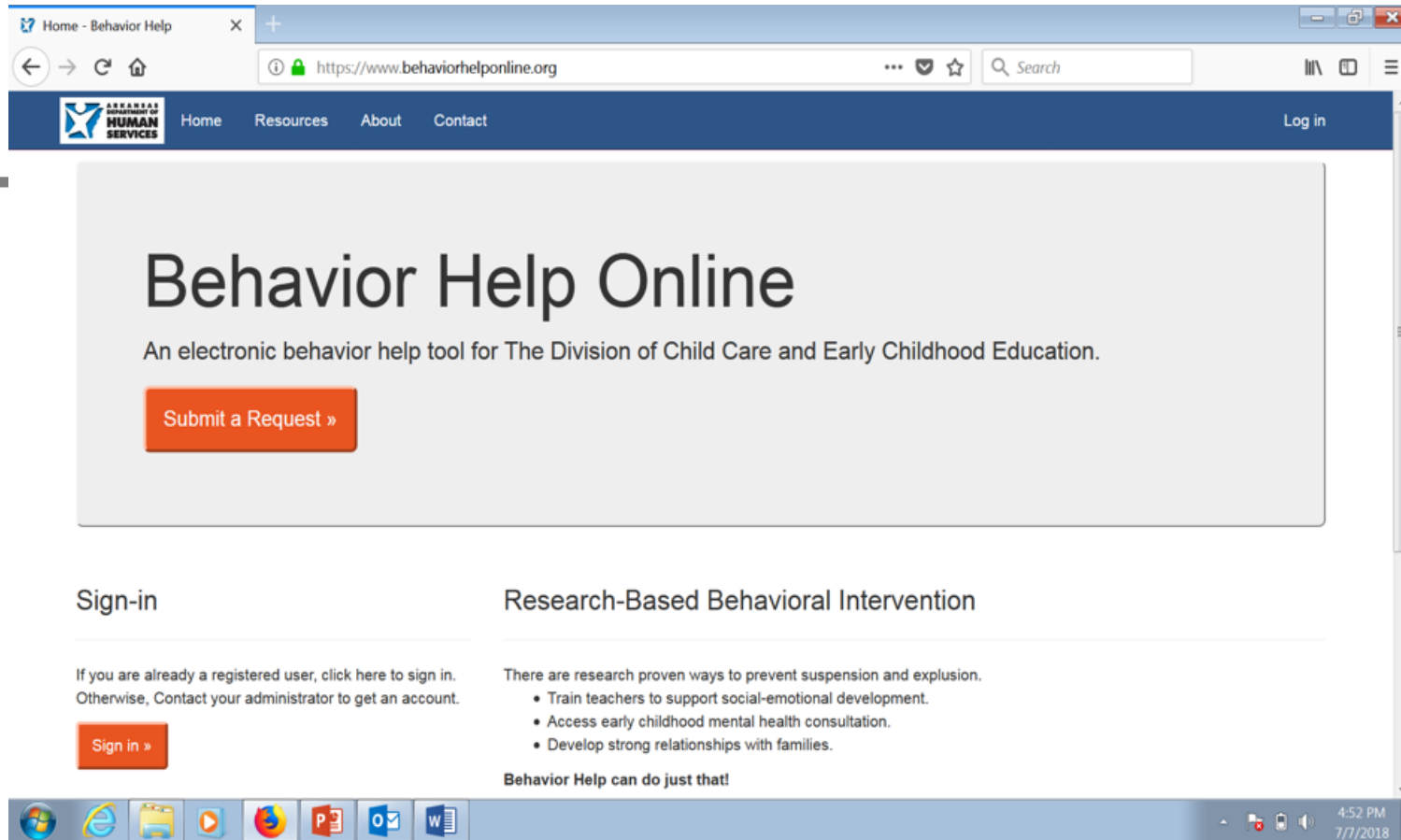
2 years in.....

Process data has helped us understand provider utilization patterns and drives conversations around staffing and outreach efforts

Program data is helping us identify training needs for ECE professionals in the state

Progress data has helped us advocate to continue and expand

Prevalence data....too soon to tell!



[Home](#)[Resources](#)[About](#)[Contact](#)

## Support Request

### Child Care Program Information

Center Name:

Center Address:

Center City:

Center County:

School District:

Better Beginnings level:

Select



[Home](#)[Staff Resources](#)[Contact](#)

Hello thomas@yahoo.com!

[Log off](#)

## Support Specialist

Search by center

☐ include assigned

### Pending Requests

ID	Center Name	
505	Test Site 700	<a href="#">Forms   Assign</a>

[Create New Request](#)

### Open Cases

ID	Center Name	Assigned	
504	Test Site 100	DCCECE	<a href="#">Forms</a>

'Include assigned' below the searchbar to display assigned cases.

Center: **Test Site 700**  
Case #: **506**

### Opening forms

Name	Saved
------	-------

Support Request	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Interview	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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SDQ	<input type="checkbox"/>
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TPITOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
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TPOT	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------

Classroom Behavior Observation	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------------------------	--------------------------

BH Site Visit	<input type="checkbox"/>
---------------	--------------------------

BH Strategy Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
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### Closing forms

Name	Saved
------	-------

SDQ Post	<input type="checkbox"/>
----------	--------------------------

Behavior Help Closure Form	<input type="checkbox"/>
----------------------------	--------------------------

### Other

Name	Saved
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Case Transfer Form	<input type="checkbox"/>
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# Data System Lessons

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Who are your users?

Pilot/Refine your data elements before building database

Allow time for discussion of data sharing needs, data sharing agreements and privacy issues

Expect delays

Train, Train, Train - helping professionals are not research staff

Budget for change



# Activity

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# Debrief and Closing

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# Reflections

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## **Prevalence, Program, Process, Progress**

Start where you have momentum or what you need first

Use data

- To get the supports programs need
- To support CQI and better target supports
- To make the case for expansion of programming

Look at the data you have & other places to get data, e.g. parents

Always give data analysis to those who gave you data



## Contact Information

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