Department of Health and Human Services,
Division of Economic & Housing Stability,
Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration

A Guide for Developing an Expulsion Prevention Policy

Authored by: The NH Expulsion Prevention Task Force

The purpose of this guide is to help New Hampshire (NH) child care programs develop and implement a policy to prevent or to minimize expulsion.

Policies and procedures help communicate expectations to both parents and staff. Policy also helps when questions arise. The NH Child Care Licensing Rules requires child care programs to have a policy that includes language specific to preventing the expulsion of children due to challenging behaviors.

The NH Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration (Bureau) is committed to ensuring that all children have access to quality child care programs that provide nurturing, positive learning and promote social-emotional development. The Bureau recognizes the adverse effects of expulsion on children and families and has responded by supporting child care programs with training and technical assistance.

The importance of expulsion prevention was highlighted by a policy statement released by the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education. This statement provided guidance to states on establishing policy and practices to prevent, significantly limit, and ultimately eliminate expulsion and suspension in child care programs. The release of this policy statement triggered the need for our state to do more to meet that goal.

The Bureau created a task force to respond to this policy statement. The Expulsion Prevention Task Force has met for the past three years under the leadership of the Bureau in collaboration with the Preschool Technical Assistance Network (PTAN) Child Care Inclusion Project. The task force includes member representation from NH child care programs, NH Child Care Licensing, NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, NH Office of Health Equity, Child Care Aware of NH, higher education, and non-profit agencies. Members have worked to develop resources that raise awareness of the importance of this issue; recommend practices that support children and families and prevent suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary discipline practices; and provide direction in the development of policy.
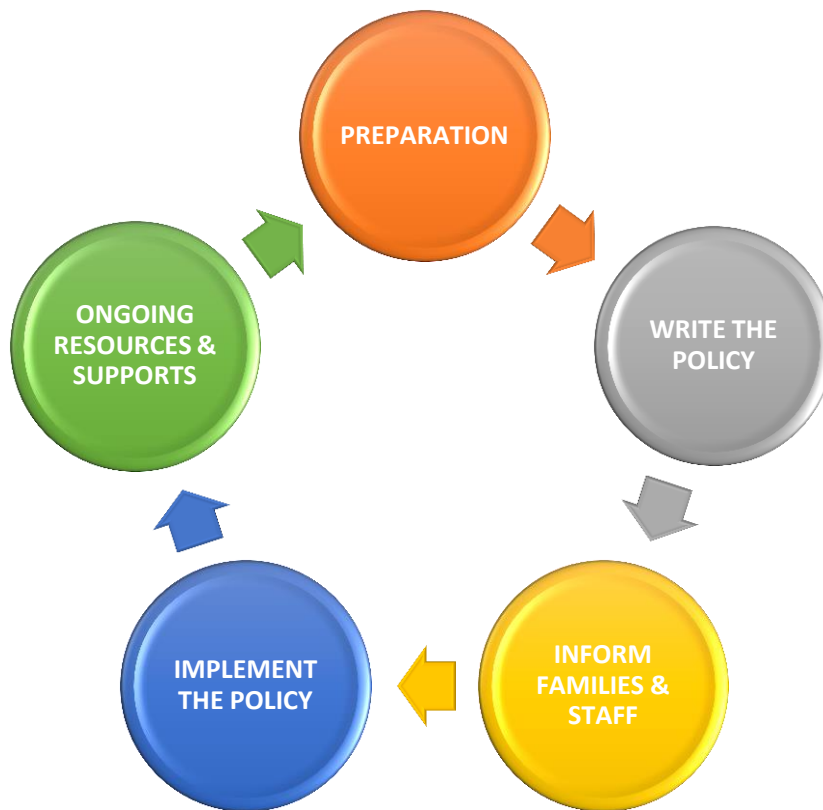
The Task Force hopes that this guide assists NH child care programs in their efforts to develop and implement an Expulsion Prevention Policy that supports the successful inclusion of all children.

Acknowledgements

The contributions of Task Force members past and present are gratefully acknowledged. Your commitment to the goal of preventing, significantly limiting and ultimately eliminating expulsion is greatly appreciated.

In addition, the following task force members are acknowledged for their contribution to the development of this guide:

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Section I: Preparation	
Resources, Training and Technical Assistance	**Notes**
1. Why is an expulsion prevention policy important for my program? Research tells us quality early childhood programs that nurture positive learning and social–emotional development have positive effects on the lives of young children and families. The success of young children in child care settings is closely tied to their social, emotional, and behavioral development. National data shows a troubling number of children are being expelled from programs. Not only are the practices of suspension and expulsion linked with long-term negative outcomes, it also represents a missed opportunity to identify and address the needs of a high-risk group of children. The newly revised NH Child Care Licensing Rules (see pages 81-82) includes language specific to preventing the expulsion of children from child care due to challenging behaviors. **What is expulsion?** The complete and permanent removal of a child from an educational system, e.g., child care center (Gilliam & Shahar, 2006). Terminating the enrollment of a child or family in the regular group setting because of a challenging behavior or a health condition. (Caring for Our Children; National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd edition)	

What is suspension?

Reduction in the amount of time a child may be in attendance of the 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 is included in this definition. (Caring for Our Children; National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd edition)

What are challenging behaviors?

Any behavior that makes it difficult for a young child to be successful in a group environment. Such behaviors interfere with a child's ability to positively interact with others and may disrupt the learning process or even pose health and/or safety risks. Such behaviors often frustrate adults because the behaviors do not respond to typical behavior intervention strategies. (Izen and Kalinowski, 2010)

Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in prosocial interactions with peers and adults. (Powell, Fixsen, Smith, & Fox, 2007)

Resources to learn more about what expulsion is and why it's important to prevent:

- Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings: A Program Leader's Guide to Supporting ALL Children's Success
- A 12-minute TED Talk that provides an excellent overview
- Understanding and Eliminating Expulsion in Early Childhood Programs

2. **Who** should provide input in writing a program's expulsion prevention policy?
   - Staff?
   - Families?
   - Others? (i.e. community, Board of Directors)

3. **What** should the expulsion prevention policy specifically include?

   At a minimum the policy must be compliant with the NH Child Care Licensing requirement addressing the prevention of expulsion

   (See NH Child Care Licensing Rule pages 81-82)

The policy must include:

- Steps the program will take to assist the child in maintaining enrollment prior to expelling the child for challenging behavior(s).
- Family notification requirement regarding their child's challenging behavior(s).
- The responsibility of the program if the challenging behavior results in a serious safety risk to the child or others within the program.

Additional information this policy can include to promote best practices: • Define suspension, expulsion and challenging behavior. See above for sample definitions. • Address how staff will guide the child's behaviors using multiple intervention techniques. Click here for early childhood resources. • Address how program staff can access additional resources to support the child and family and prevent expulsion. • Address staff professional development participation requirements related to supporting challenging behaviors. • Documentation protocols for challenging behaviors. • Provide families with at least two weeks' notice to find alternate care unless the child poses an immediate safety risk.	
4. When must your expulsion prevention policy be implemented? • By April 30, 2019 all programs are required to have a written policy that includes language specific to preventing the expulsion of children from child care due to challenging behaviors. • The written policy must be communicated to families at the time of enrollment.	
5. Resources, training and technical assistance available to NH programs. Child Care Aware of NH (CCAoNH) provides quality professional developmental opportunities through training and technical assistance (TA) services to improve program quality and increase teacher competency. The Training and TA Specialists strive to ensure that providers and programs are receiving consistent, high quality professional development services either via through training, phone or email consultation or through onsite visits. CCAoNH services are free. • Access CCAoNH website for more information on policy development. • For support on writing your expulsion prevention policy contact CCAoNH for Technical Assistance at 1-855-393-1731 or (603) 578-1386.	

Section II: Write the policy	
Draft, Revise and Finalize the policy	**Notes**
1. Sample introductory paragraph that can be used for your program's policy. _____ [child care program name] is committed to ensuring that all children attending our program have access to a quality early childhood program that provides developmentally appropriate experiences and nurtures positive learning and development. We will involve the child's family in our efforts to support his or her successful inclusion in our program. _____ [child care program name] will make every effort to successfully include and maintain children in our program.	
2. Draft the body of the policy using Section I as guidance. **Questions to consider as you write your policy:** • Does your policy have a positive focus? • Is it clear and concise? • Do you spell out all acronyms the first time they are used?	
3. Who do you need to share the draft policy with before finalizing? • Staff? • Families? • Others? (i.e. community, Board of Directors)	
4. Finalize the policy and determine how it will be distributed. • Family handbook? • Staff handbook? • Program website? • Other?	

Section III: Inform Families & Staff	
Develop a plan to inform families and staff of the policy	**Notes**
The program administration will develop a plan ensuring staff and families* know and understand the policy. **Guiding questions to consider:** • How will you inform current families of the new policy? (i.e. family handbook, newsletter, memo) • How will you inform all staff of the new policy? (i.e. staff meeting, staff handbook, memo) • How will you inform new staff and families? *Reminder: NH Child Care Licensing Rule states families must be notified of the written expulsion prevention policy at enrollment.*	

Section IV: Implement the policy	
Develop a plan to implement the policy	**Notes**
1. The program director will develop and put into place a plan to support teachers to implement the program's expulsion prevention policy. **The plan will address key areas including:** • Professional development plans for staff that address: ➢ Social-emotional development ➢ Supporting children with challenging behaviors ➢ Communicating with families about difficult topics • Strategies to evaluate effective implementation of the policy • Family support and provision of resources	
2. Additional resources available to programs: • Contact CCAoNH for Technical Assistance on implementing the program's policy.	

Section V: Ongoing Resources and Supports
Resources available to support your program's efforts to maintain all children

1. Complete The Expulsion Prevention Checklist, a self-assessment that will:

- Identify your program's areas of strengths and challenges specific to the inclusion of all children.
- Support your creation of an "improvement plan" that promotes inclusion of all children, particularly those with challenging behaviors.
- Target the assistance needed to implement your improvement plan.

2. Access national professional development resources to support your program's ability to successfully include all children, particularly those children with challenging behaviors.

National Websites that address challenging behaviors:
- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovation (NCPMI)
- The Pyramid Model Consortium
- Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings: A Program Leader's Guide to Supporting ALL Children's Success
- National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

3. Access additional support through the Preschool Technical Assistance Network (PTAN). The goal of the PTAN Child Care Inclusion Project is to support child care providers so that they can successfully include children who have challenging behaviors and/or other special needs thus reducing the need to suspend or expel a child and family from their child care program. Skilled and knowledgeable PTAN consultants provide telephone and onsite consultation depending upon the intensity of need. PTAN services are FREE.

To request assistance, NH early childhood teachers and directors contact the PTAN Project Assistant at 603-206-6833.