



South Carolina Institute of
Medicine & Public Health

Foundations for Success Taskforce

Taskforce Meeting #2
March 26, 2026

About IMPH



www.imph.org



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Our Mission

Our mission is to collectively inform policy to improve health and health care.

We serve as an independent, nonprofit organization working to collectively inform policy to improve health and health care in South Carolina. IMPH provides nonpartisan, evidence-based information to guide policymakers in making impactful health policy decisions.

We strive to be the leading and trusted nonpartisan resource for evidence-based information on South Carolina's most critical population health issues.

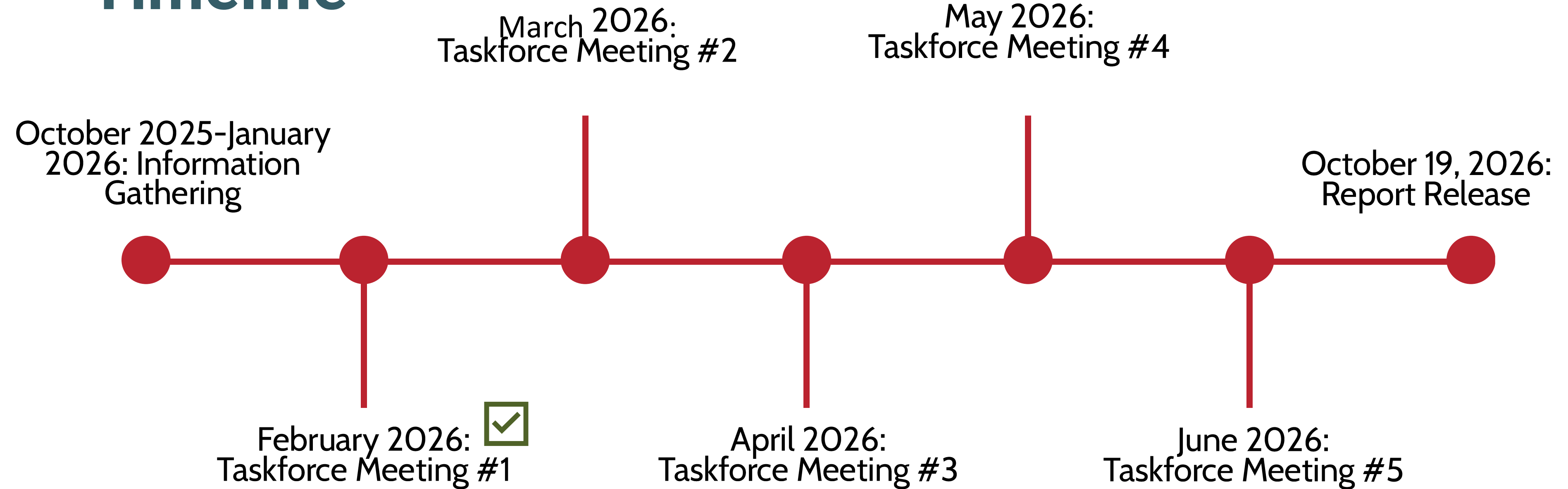


Welcome

Michael Leach, MMFT
Foundations for Success Taskforce Chair



Timeline



Goals of Taskforce

- The Taskforce process will produce an action plan including:
 1. Detailed recommendations comprised of action steps across 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year implementation timelines;
 2. Identified facilitators and support for successful implementation; and
 3. Key champions for implementation
- IMPH will serve as a facilitator of this process
- All decisions regarding the action plan and its contents will be made by the Taskforce members



The Policy and Practice Landscape for Preventing Exclusionary Discipline in Early Childhood

Heather Smith Googe, PhD

***South Carolina Child Care Inclusion Collaborative,
South Carolina Partnerships for Inclusion, South Carolina Pyramid PIECES***





The Policy and Practice Landscape for Preventing Exclusionary Discipline in Early Childhood Settings

Dr. Heather S. Googe

March 26, 2026

IMPH Foundations for Success Taskforce Meeting

Objectives

Define

Define exclusionary practices (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion) as they relate to young children.

Describe

Describe policy initiatives that are currently being considered in SC.

Build

Build awareness of existing structures and practices that are available in SC to prevent the use of exclusionary discipline practices across the early childhood mixed delivery system.



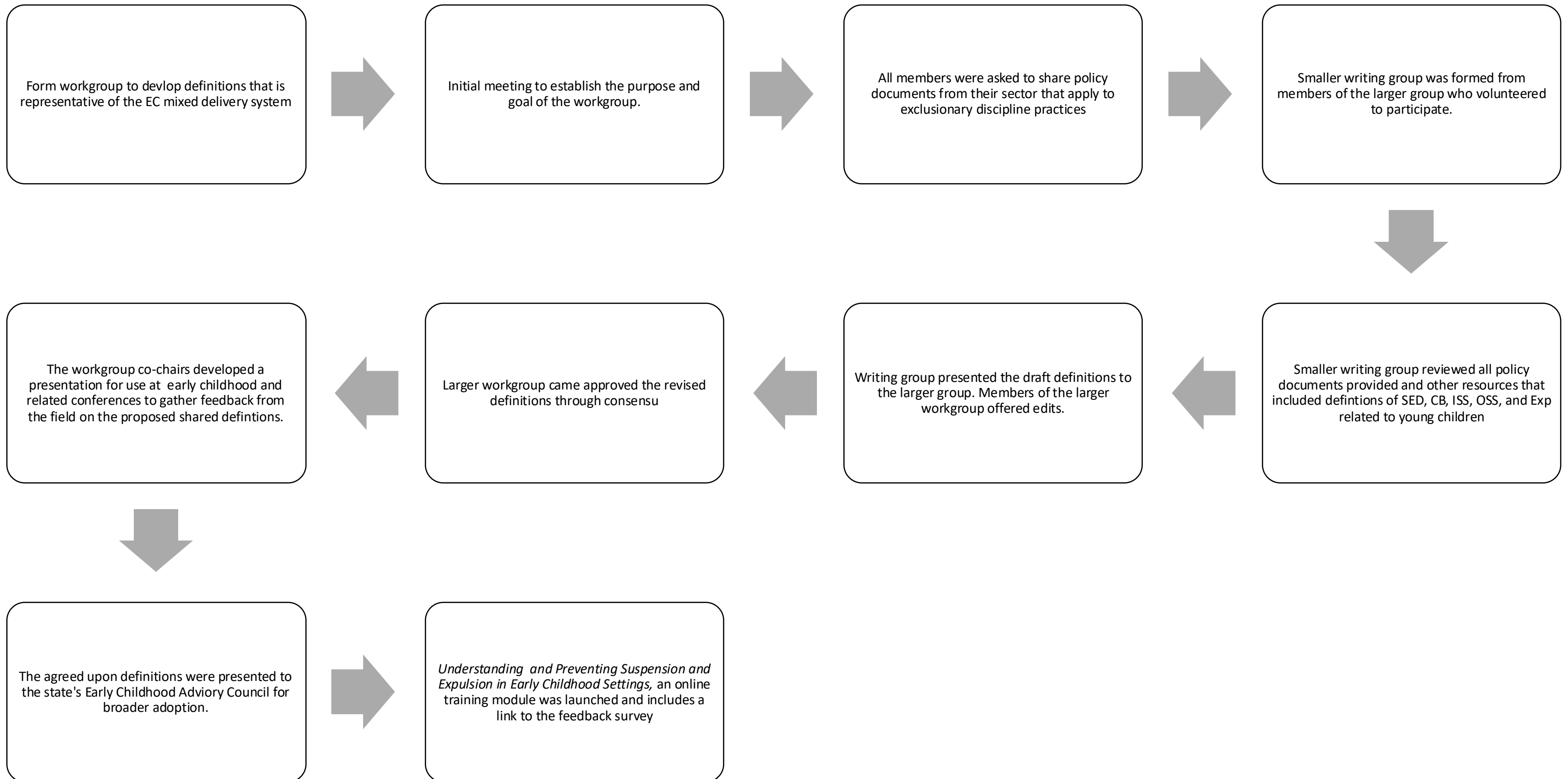
**SUSPENSION
EXPULSION
WORK GROUP**

2022-2023

Develop a universal definition for suspension and expulsion across early childhood sectors that can be used to inform activities and services that prevent the use of exclusionary practices.



Iterative process for developing definitions, building consensus, and gathering feedback from the field



Stakeholder Organizations Represented

- SC DSS-Division for Early Care and Education (ABC Quality & Child Care Licensing)
- SC Child Care Inclusion Collaborative
- SC Dept. of Education-OELL
- SC Dept. of Education-Office of Special Education Services
- SC Dept. of Mental Health
- SC First Steps
- SC Infant Mental Health Association
- SC DHHS-BabyNet
- SC Program for Infant Toddler Care
- SC Partnerships for Inclusion
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Family Connection of SC
- Team for Early Childhood Solutions
- PEAR
- Help Me Grow SC
- Pyramid PIECES

Drafted Universal Definitions

Social-Emotional Development

Challenging Behavior

In-School Suspension

Out-of-School Suspension

Expulsion

Social Emotional Development

The developing capacity of the child from birth through five years of age to form close, safe, and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in developmentally, socially, and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture. Children's development in this domain affects their development and learning in every other domain.

(Adapted from NCPMI and SC Early Learning Standards)





Challenging Behavior

Any repeated pattern of behavior, or adult perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in positive interactions with peers and adults. Young children can display challenging behavior as they are learning new skills, communicating their needs, and developing relationships.

Challenging behavior is part of the developmental trajectory of young children.

(Adapted from the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations and the Division for Early Childhood)



In-School Suspension

An exclusionary practice that involves removing or excluding a child from a classroom or from activities that include other children, while the child physically remains in the childcare/school setting, in response to challenging behavior. This includes when the child is removed from the classroom to spend time with administrator, counselor, behavior therapist or other adult.

This practice is harmful to children and families because it disrupts learning, relationship building, and access to consistent and reliable care.

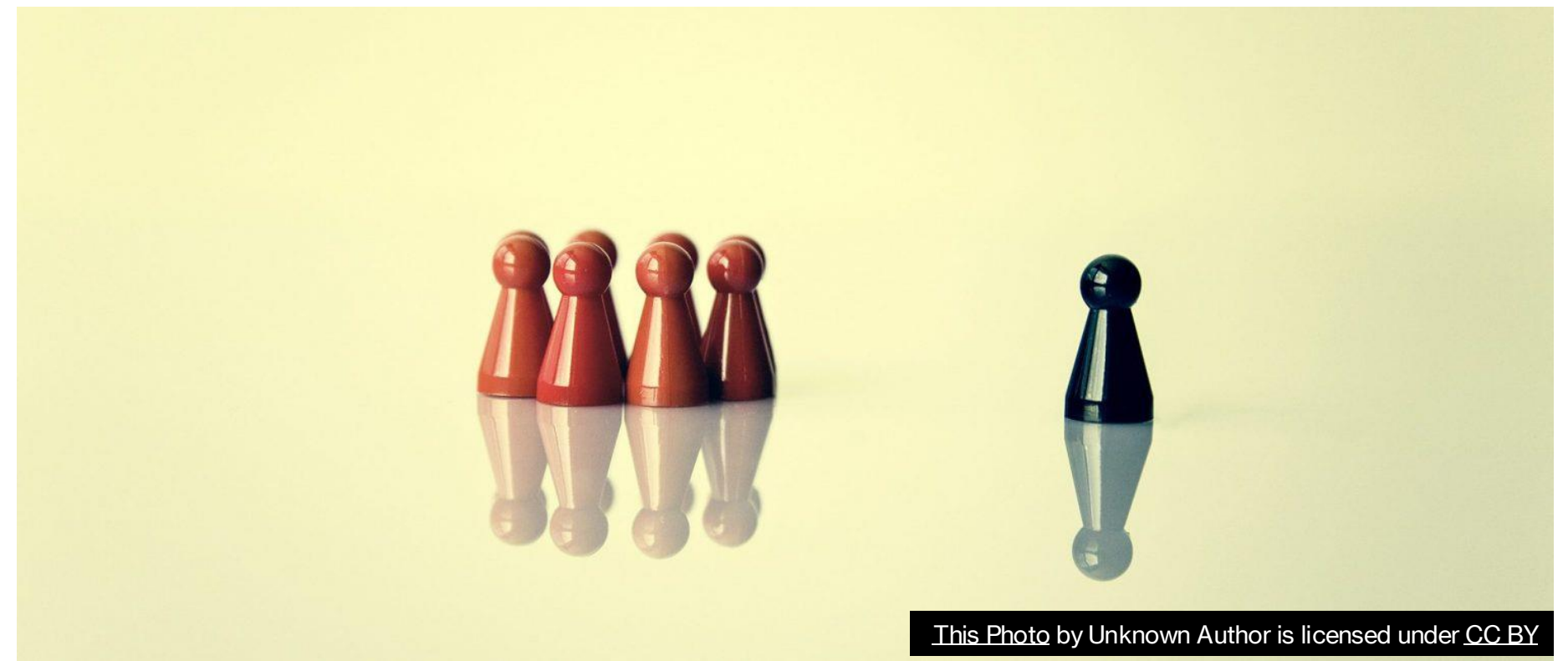
(Adapted from the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations)

Out-of-School Suspension

An exclusionary practice in which a child is sent home early or not allowed to return to school/program for one or more days and/or the school/program restricts the child's access to the full program day in response to challenging behavior.

This practice is harmful to children and families because it disrupts learning, relationship building, and access to consistent and reliable care.

(Adapted from the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations)



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

Expulsion



An exclusionary practice in which a child is permanently dismissed from the program for what is deemed challenging behavior by the adults in the early learning environment.

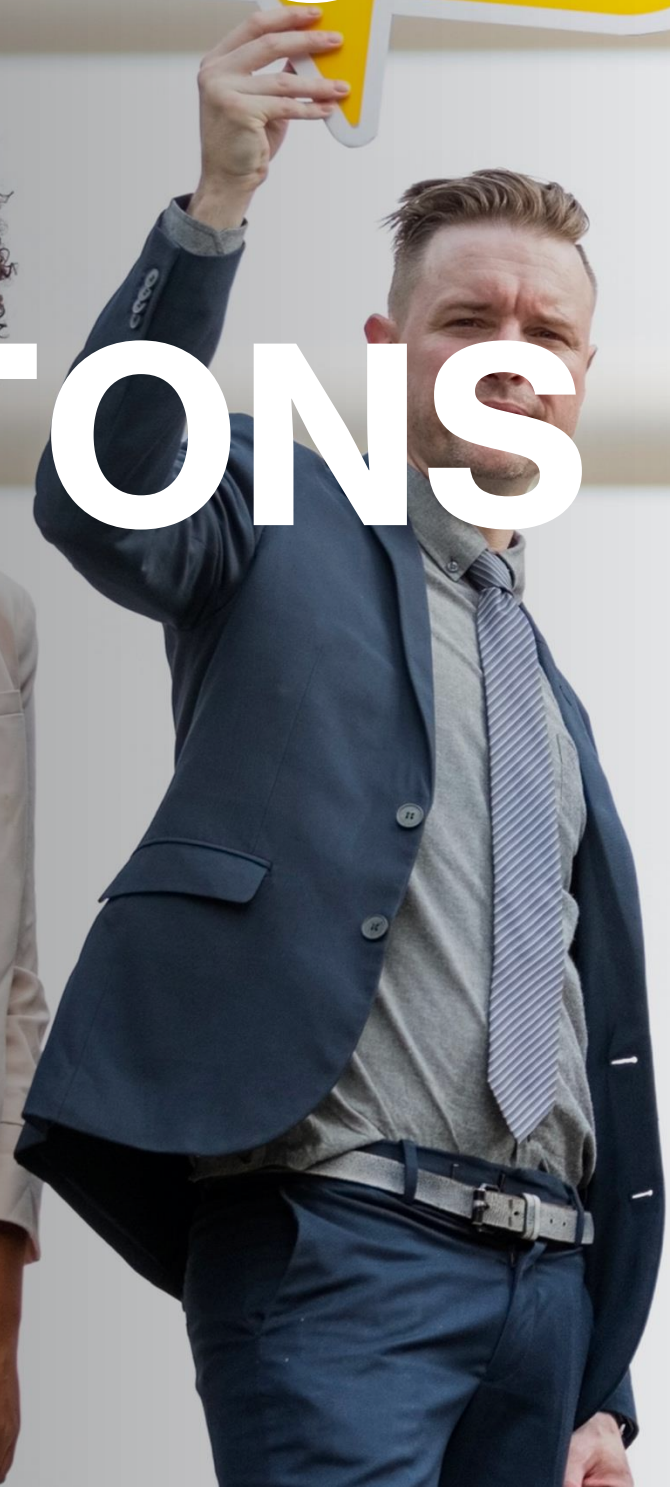
This practice is harmful to children and families because it disrupts learning, relationship building, and access to consistent and reliable care.

This includes instances when a school/program dismisses a child or the parent/family is encouraged to disenroll from the school/program.

This does not include collaboratively planned transition to another environment (e.g., program, service, or classroom), deemed more appropriate for the child, such as special education services, transitional classrooms, or therapeutic preschool programs by the family, current and new program, and any other recommended services (e.g, therapy, behavior specialist, mental health consultant, IEP Team, IFSP Team, child welfare, etc.).

(Adapted from the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations)

FIELD VALIDATION OF DEFINITIONS



Road Show and Embedded Survey

- 2023-2024: presentations at multiple conferences and convenings for early childhood professionals
- 2024: Launched *Understanding and Preventing Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood Settings* online module
- Embedded survey link in in-person and online module





Survey Design continued...

- For each definition participants were asked rate agreement (i.e., yes, no, I don't know) whether the definitions were
 1. Understandable
 2. Usable in their context
 3. Appropriate

Participant Characteristics (n=643)

Role	n	%
Teacher	221	34.4
Director	178	27.7
Assistant Teacher	64	10.0
Public School Administrator	56	8.7
Trainer / Technical Assistance Provider	51	7.9
Other Roles	73	11.3



CURRENT POLICY INITIATIVES



Federal Guidelines/Non- regulatory guidance

- DHHS/ED (2014)
- Head start Performance Standards

State Agency/Entity Guidelines

**CERDEP public
and private**

ABC Quality

Legislation- National View

(Loomis et al., 2021)

Table 2 Bill information overall

State	Year introduced	Party control	Passed	Language (prohibited or limited)	Population	Preschool
Colorado	2017	Split	No ^A	Prohibit expulsion, Limit suspension	Preschool through 2 nd grade in charter or public school	School district, board of cooperative services, charter school, or public preschool program (enrolling entity)
Massachusetts	2017	D	Pending	Limit suspension and expulsion	Preschoolers	“Preschoolers” in title
Illinois	2017	D	Yes	Prohibit expulsion	Children in state-funded or state-licensed early childhood programs (birth to age 5)	State-funded or State-licensed early childhood programs
Maryland	2017	D	Yes	Prohibit expulsion Limit suspension	Prekindergarten through 2 nd grade in public schools	Public schools (prekindergarten)
DC	2015	D	Yes	Prohibit expulsion and suspension	Public prekindergarten	Publicly funded prekindergarten program
California	2017	D	Yes	Prohibit expulsion	Public preschool	Contracting agency, state preschool program
Georgia ¹	2015	R	No	Prohibit suspension and expulsion	Pre-K & Kindergarten	Public educational institution (preschool)
Georgia ²	2018	R	Yes	Limit expulsion & suspension	Pre-K through 3rd grade	A public preschool, a Pre-K program in a public school
Texas	2017	R	Yes	Prohibit suspension	Below 3rd grade	School district and open-enrollment charter school
Virginia	2018	R	Yes	Prohibit expulsion, limit suspension	Pre-K through 3rd grade	Public preschool
Connecticut	2015	D	Yes	Prohibit suspension and expulsion	Pre-K through 2nd grade	A local or regional board of education, state or local charter school or inter-district magnet school that offers a preschool program
New Jersey	2016	D	Yes	Prohibit expulsion and suspension	Pre-K through 2nd grade	School district or charter school
Ohio	2017	R	No	Prohibit expulsion, limit suspension	Pre-K through 3rd grade	Pre-kindergarten, public schools

^ANew bill (HB19-1194) passed as of 5/13/2019

Colorado: H.R. 17-1210, 2017; Massachusetts: Mass. S. 2255, 2018; Illinois: Ill. H.R. 2663, 2017; Maryland: Md. H.D. 425, 2017; Washington DC: D.C. Council 150, 2015; California: Cal. Assemb. 752, 2017; Georgia¹: Ga. H.R. 135, 2015 ; Georgia²: Ga. H.R. 17-1210, 2018; Texas: Tex. H.R. 674, 2017; Virginia: Va. S. 170, 2018; Connecticut: Conn. S. 1053, 2015; New Jersey: N.J S. 2081, 2016; 2015: Ohio S. 246, 2017

Legislation- South Carolina

- H. 4068 and S. 430
 - Both bills were introduced last year
 - Includes definitions similar to the the definitions drafted by the workgroup
 - Only covers publicly funded preschool programs (i.e., CERDEP, EIA, Title I, and district)
 - Outlines measures to take prior to suspending or expelling a child
 - SCDE requirements to provide professional development and resources to districts to include technical assistance
 - House bill has been referred to the House Education and Public Works Committee
 - Senate bill has been referred to the Committee on Education



**What supports
are available in
SC?**

Self-Reported Supports Needed to Reduce Suspension and Expulsion (n=643)

Support Type	n	%
Training on positive classroom management strategies	565	87.9
In-classroom coaching or consultation	553	86.0
Training on social and emotional development	553	86.0
Access to family supports related to child development and behavior	540	84.0
Access to behavior support services	536	83.4
Access to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants	494	76.8
Other	29	4.5

Pyramid Model Approach

- Adopting a posture of **support**:
 - Supporting each and every child
 - Supporting each and every family
 - Supporting each and every teacher and provider
- Promoting **equity** and addressing bias
- Supporting **inclusion**, not exclusion



Pyramid Model Supports in SC:



**FREE ACCESS TO
PYRAMID MODEL
MODULES**

We are excited to offer FREE access to three
Pyramid Model training eModules!

- BIRTH TO FIVE
- TRAUMA INFORMED CARE
- REDUCING IMPLICIT BIAS

• • •

**CEU and Child Care Training Credit
Available upon Completion!**



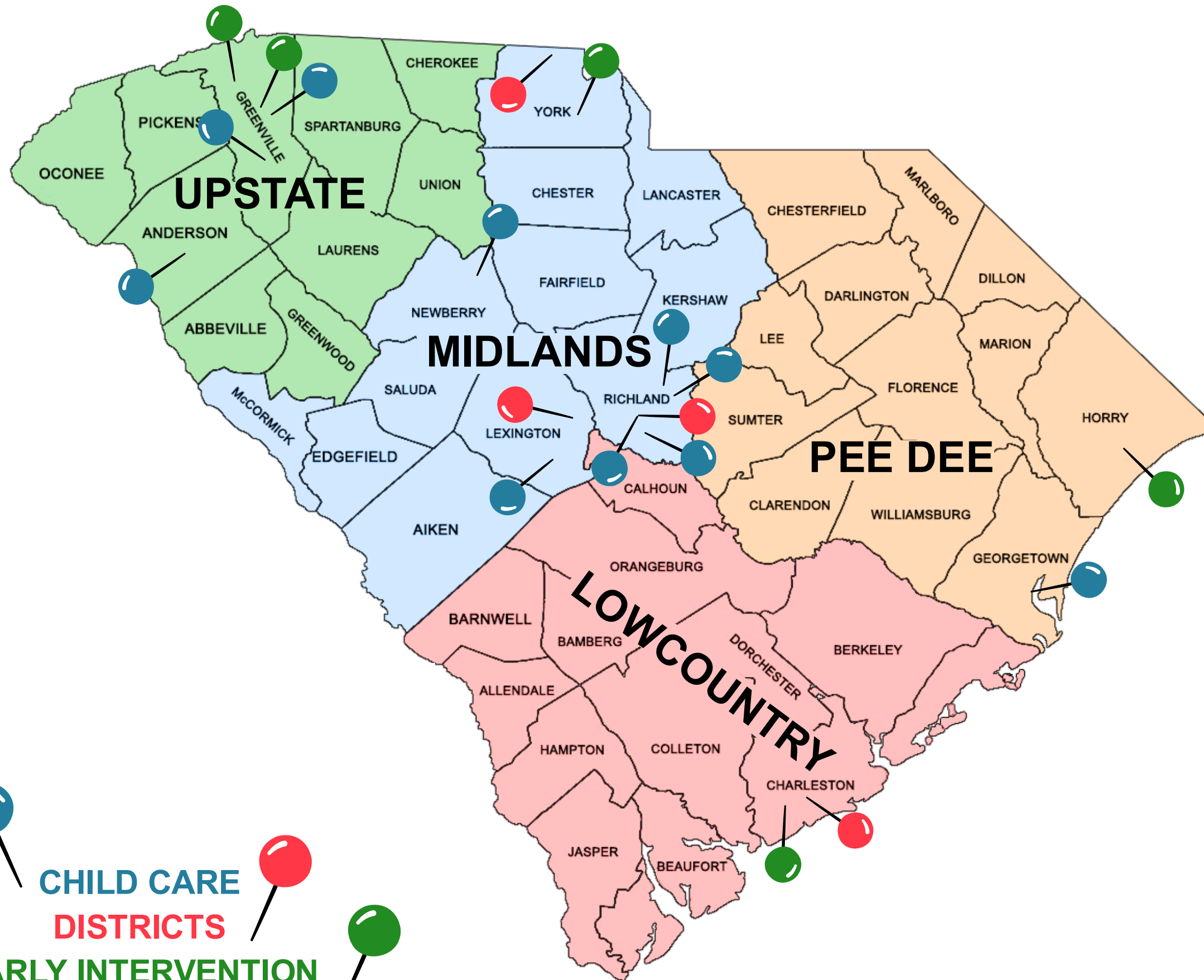
Visit www.SCPyramidPIECES.org
for more information!

- Program-wide Pyramid Model Implementation
- Behavior Support Network
- State Leadership Team
- Pyramid Model Community of Practice



Program-Wide IMPLEMENTATION SITES

UPDATED February 2026



Exploration
Bright New Beginnings
Lexington 2
Little Lamb
Promising Futures
Small Impressions
Sunshine House

Installation
Clover
Increasing Dimensions
Success by Steps (Columbia)
The Champions Center (Anderson)
Windsor West Academy

Initial Implementation
A Child's Haven, Inc (Greenville)
Charleston County
Lexington-Richland 5
Newberry CDC

Full Implementation
Easterseals (Charleston)
Easterseals (Horry)
Easterseals (York)
Tiny Feet Early Intervention

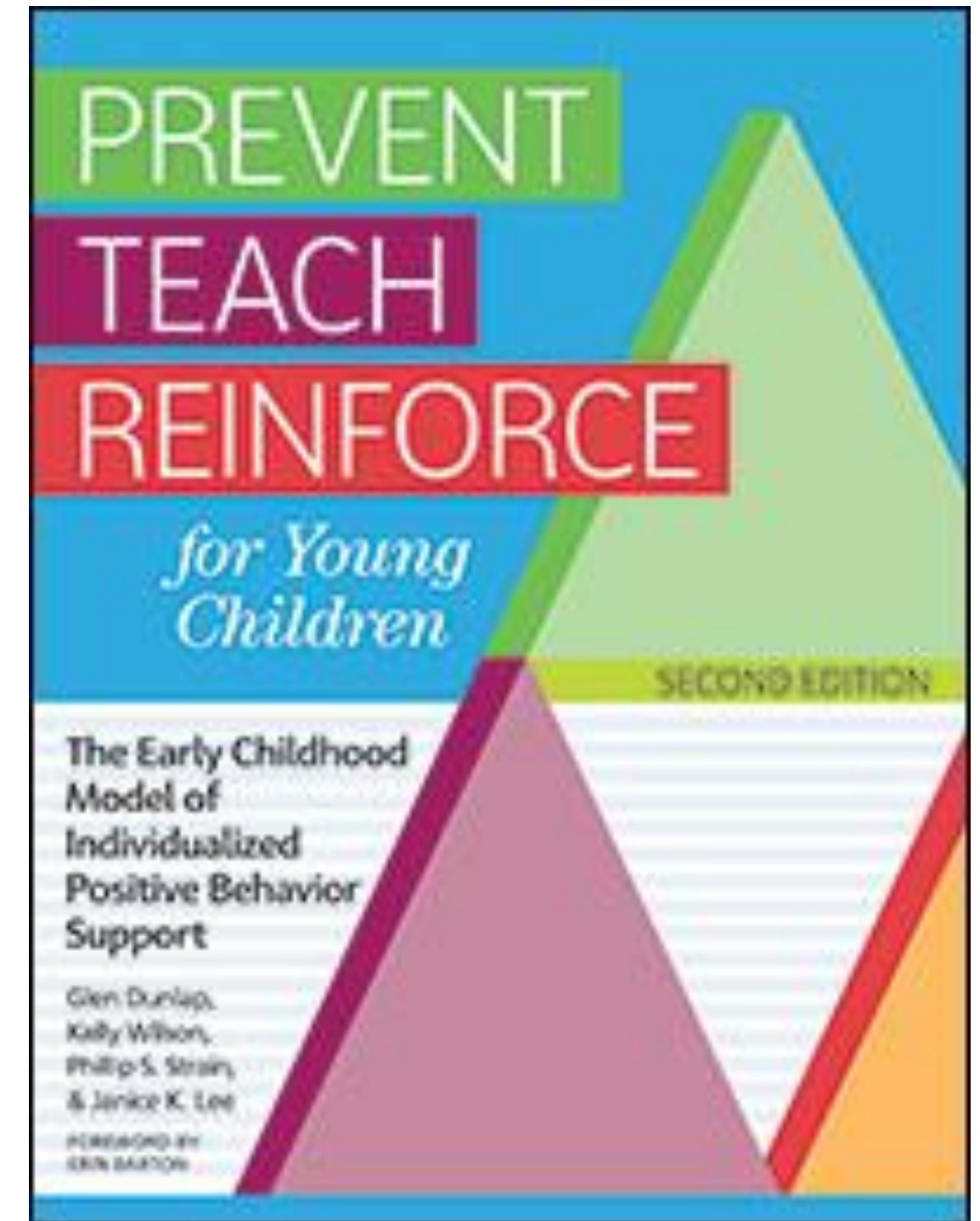
Foundation for the Behavior Support Network



5 Classroomwide Practices to Improve Behavior

- 1 Use a Five-One Ratio of Positive Attention**
The 5:1 ratio of positive attention is based on research that has shown that children are better behaved in preschool settings when adults spend the majority of their time attending to positive behavior and not challenging behavior.
- 2 Use Predictable Schedules**
Developing a daily schedule and directly teaching children what comes next is about maintaining a routine and keeping all of the children informed about the routine. This strategy maximizes children's ability to predict what comes next.
- 3 Establish Routines within Routines**
The predictability of a general schedule does not provide enough structure to prevent some children's challenging behaviors. It is often helpful to specify other levels of predictability with one's overall classroom schedule.
- 4 Directly Teach Behavioral Expectations**
Make certain that all children know precisely what behavioral expectations you have for each routine. It is recommended that there be no more than three expectations for any one routine.
- 5 Directly Teach Peer-Related Social Skills**
Actively teaching social skills involves careful planning around routines and activities, arranging the environment to support peer interaction, and implementing strategies such as peer-mediated interventions, adult cueing and prompting, and reinforcement.

See examples and learn how to implement these strategies in *Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children: The Early Childhood Model of Individualized Positive Behavior Support*.
Learn more at: <https://bpub.fyi/PTR-YC>



Volume 1

1. Introducing the Reframing Challenging behavior Video Series
2. Let's talk about Hot Buttons
3. Reframing Children's Behavior
4. Just Breathe: Why Breathing Matters
5. Growth Mindset: All Children Can Learn Positive Behavior
6. Neutralizing Routines

Volume 2

1. Introducing Reframing Regulation
2. Co-Regulation
3. Self-Regulation
4. Mindfulness Connections
5. Environments that Support Healthy Regulation
6. The Reason Why What We Say Matters
7. How Does Movement Relate to Healthy Regulation Skills?

 **REFRAMING BEHAVIOR VIDEO SERIES**
PYRAMID PIECES BEHAVIOR SUPPORT NETWORK

Volume 1
Reframing Challenging Behavior

Volume 2
Reframing Regulation

For more information, visit
www.scp pyramidpieces.org



TOPICS Covered

DAP Learning for 3s and 4s

Function of Behavior for Young Children

Pyramid Model & Supportive Practices

Planning for Response to Challenging Behavior

Policy and Codes of Conduct

Continuity to Kindergarten

Free Online Learning Module

Understanding and Preventing Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood Settings



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Connecting all South Carolinians who work with young children and their families to support social emotional well-being in infants and young children.





**PYRAMID
PIECES**

Promoting Integrated Early Childhood
Emotional & Social supports



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QUESTIONS?

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- U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and U. S. Department of Education (ED) (2014). *Policy statement on expulsion and suspension policies in early childhood settings*. Washington, D. C.: DHHS and Ed, Author. Available at <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensionspdf-102136.pdf>

Panel Discussion: Exploring Implementation Barriers and Areas of Opportunity

*LaQuana Aldridge, Elementary Education Directors' Lead
South Carolina Association of School Administrators (Richland School
District 1)*

*Kerri Wikel, Pyramid Model Coordinator
Pyramid PIECES*

*Sonya Harrison-Young, Early Childhood Roundtable Lead
South Carolina Association of School Administrators (Lexington School
District 4)*



Overview of Key Informant Interview Themes, Data Deck Updates, and Recommendation Development Discussion

Taryn Farrell, MPH

South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health



Key Insights from Key Informant Interviews

Drivers

- **Practice and Policy Misalignment – Variations in Definitions and Reporting**
- **System Strain and Workforce Stressors**
- **Behavior as Communication**
- **Early Childhood Mental Health Infrastructure Capacity**

Areas of Opportunity and Implementation Challenges

- Cross-sector definition alignment efforts
- Professional development modules for specialized instruction
- Coaching and consulting modules
- Pyramid PIECES Model
- Infant Mental Health Consultation
- Inclusion Collaboratives
- Maximizing Preschool Development Block Grant funding
- Early care providers and early education wellness initiatives
- Increasing access to supportive services that are accessible and culturally relevant
- Prioritizing strength-based approaches
- Closed loop communication across educational, clinical, therapeutic, and community-based settings
- Peer support models for parents, caregivers, and families
- Programming that promotes positive childhood experiences and family supports
- Trauma-responsive training for providers, educators, parents/guardians, and first responders
- Culturally responsive training for providers and educators



A photograph of four young children sitting on the floor in a classroom, clapping their hands. The children are diverse in age and ethnicity. The background shows a typical classroom setting with shelves and colorful decorations. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

Recommendation Development Discussion *(Small Group)*



Lunch



Recommendation Development

Please keep the following criteria in mind when developing recommendations for the 5-yr Action Plan.

Specific: Who is responsible, and for what? Name a lead entity if possible.

Measurable: How will we know if we have achieved success?

Achievable: There needs to be a chance it can happen.

Results-oriented: What does the outcome look like?

Time-Bound: When should/will the activities and actions occur?

Clearly written: Easy to understand.

Include an estimate of resources that will be required, when possible.





Recommendation Development Discussion *(Large Group)*



Next Steps

Next Meeting

First Choice Community Center

April 30th, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Please complete the evaluation.

We will send out meeting materials, a link to the updated recommendation development form, and invitations to recommendation development office hours in a week.





South Carolina Institute of
Medicine & Public Health

*For more information and to
sign up for our newsletter:*

Thank You!

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