



# Standing United: Preventing Suspension & Expulsion in Early Childhood

For Families



## HeartWired Video

<https://youtu.be/ZacejFXeQ4?si=RULjiMY69em2ReND>

## Standing United Preventing Suspension & Expulsion in Early Childhood



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heartwired

## What's Happening

Did you know that toddlers and preschoolers are being kicked out of school more often than older kids? Research shows that young children are expelled three times more often! Child care programs often face big challenges like not having enough staff, large class sizes, and not enough training for teachers. People across the country are working hard to raise awareness about child care suspensions and expulsions to find better ways to help teachers. But even with these efforts, expulsions and suspensions are still happening in many centers.

## What We Know

Young children are discovering how to navigate their emotions, communicate their needs, and connect with others. Each child has their own way of learning and reacting to the world, making every experience unique. Preschools and child care centers are super important because they help kids build friendships and get ready for school. But when kids are suspended or expelled, they lose out on these important lessons and might feel stressed or frustrated.

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# Ways You Can Advocate for Your Family

A child's growth, learning, and self-expression are unique to each individual, making them a vital part of their development. Here are some ways providers can support you, your family, and your child:

## Build Strong Relationships with the Teachers and Staff

Parents and teachers are a team! Parents know what their child needs to succeed, and teachers help children thrive in a classroom setting. Working together gives kids the best learning experience.

## Become Familiar with Development Resources

Every child learns and grows at their own speed. If your child needs extra help, there are amazing tools to support you! Along with advice from your doctor, these resources can guide you step by step:

**Pathways.org** – Free tools like milestone trackers, videos, and blogs to help with motor skills, sensory growth, and communication. Check it out at <https://pathways.org>

**CDC's Developmental Milestones** – Learn the Signs. Act Early. Offers checklists and an online tracker to see how your child is doing. [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly)

## Things to Consider When Choosing Child Care for Your Child

Finding the right child care for your child is an important decision. Here are some things to consider when touring potential child care centers to ensure it is the best fit for your child's needs. [VQB5 Quality Profiles](#) provide information about how child care centers perform in quality measurements and other topics that are important for families, policymakers, and the general public.

View VQB5 Quality Profiles at [EarlyChildhoodQuality.doe.virginia.gov](http://EarlyChildhoodQuality.doe.virginia.gov)

To learn more, check out, [VQB5 Quality Profiles Overview Video](#) (3 min)

### Key Questions to Ask When Touring Child Care Centers

When touring a child care center, asking these questions can help you decide if it's the best choice for your child:

**What are your approaches and beliefs about child development, and what does your curriculum look like?**

In early childhood, learning is most effective when it's social and play-based. Building strong social-emotional skills early on is crucial for future learning. A curriculum that relies heavily on worksheets might not be the best fit for young children who thrive with hands-on, interactive activities.

**How big are the classes and what are the classroom environments like?**

Even if a center meets the required staff-to-child ratios, class sizes can still be large. Think about whether your child would thrive in a busy classroom or feel overwhelmed. Also, consider the classroom layout. Are they quiet and separate or open and spacious, which can lead to more noise and distractions? If your child is sensitive to noise, this might be an important factor. Additionally, ask how staff changes occur throughout the day. Are there different teachers in the morning and afternoon? How might this affect your child's sense of stability?

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### **Do teachers stay in the program, or has there been a lot of staff turnover in the past year or two?**

Staff turnover can affect your child's sense of stability. High turnover rates may indicate issues with pay, benefits, or support for staff. Ask how long teachers typically stay in the program and how staff changes are handled.

### **What is your approach to challenging behaviors and preschool suspensions?**

How does the center handle challenging behaviors? Does it focus on learning, growth, and positive reinforcement? It's important to understand how the center manages situations where children struggle to meet expectations and if they prioritize teaching and guidance over punishment.

### **How does this child care center support children with delays or disabilities?**

Has the center worked with outside professionals like therapists or specialists who come into the classroom to provide support? Does the curriculum and classroom setup consider the needs of children with a range of abilities?

### **What kind of training and continuing education do teachers receive?**

Does the center support teachers' ongoing professional development? Ask if there are opportunities for teachers to attend training beyond the minimum licensing requirements and if the center provides funding for additional education.

These questions can help you find a child care center that matches your values and meets your child's needs.

## **Access Your Community Supports and Resources**

### **Parent Resource Centers in the school districts (sometimes referred to as Family Resource Centers)**

These centers for families provide free information on supporting the success of all students, including those with disabilities and special needs. Resources vary by location but may include a free lending library, webinars, and free parent consultations.

#### **Center for Parent Information and Resources**

A central "Hub" for the network of Parent Centers serving families of children with disabilities.

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org>

#### **PEATC - Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center**

An organization that works collaboratively with families, schools, and communities to improve opportunities for education and community success with a special focus on children with disabilities.

<https://peatc.org>

## **Know Your Rights:**

You can find information on licensing standards for Virginia child care centers here:

<https://www.childcare.virginia.gov/families>

Additionally, should you ever have a concern that your child has been discriminated against in their center, you are encouraged to speak with the director about your concerns. You may also contact the licensing

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board to make a report.

For information on supports and policies in place for child care centers receiving federal funds, you can find information here:

Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ecd/policy-statement-on-inclusion.pdf>

## Explore Next Steps Once An Expulsion or Suspension Has Occurred

An expulsion or suspension can be difficult and overwhelming, but please know you will not be alone in this journey! The following are organizations and resources that can help you figure out what to do next.

### Infant and Toddler Connection or Child Find

Children may sometimes require additional support in different developmental areas and may be eligible to receive services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Depending on the age of your child, they may be eligible for services through either the Infant and Toddler Connection (ages 0-3) or Child Find (ages 2-5).

- Infant and Toddler Connection: <https://itcva.online>
- Virginia Child Find: Contact your local school district and ask for their Child Find referral information

### Local Play-Based Therapy Resources:

To learn more about play-based therapies and to find a provider near you, you can conduct a search through the Association of Play Therapy - <https://www.a4pt.org>

### Child Care Resource and Referral

For your child care needs, your local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency can help you find child care centers or home-based providers that fit your needs. They'll try to match referrals based on the information you provide. You can also check national accreditation websites to find centers in your area that have gone through a detailed credentialing process to ensure they are prepared to meet the specific needs of young children.

**Child Care Aware** can help you find the best contacts for you closest to your area - <https://www.childcareaware.org>

