



NBCDI

National Black Child
Development Institute

PARENT POWER BOOTCAMP CALL TO ACTION TOOLKIT



This call to action is presented in partnership with

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A Call to Action

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Action Agenda

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- ◆ Challenge early learning systems to **eliminate suspensions and expulsions in early childhood education** and provide appropriate support for teachers responding to the needs of children.
- ◆ Challenge early learning centers and elementary schools to provide **comprehensive, aligned wrap-around supports** as a core service.
- ◆ Challenge school districts to better **equip educators to meaningfully partner with parents** and humanely engage and effectively educate Black children of diverse backgrounds.
- ◆ Challenge parents and caregivers to **engage in daily brain development activities and healthy practices** that support social-emotional and cognitive development.
- ◆ Challenge all adults in the Black community to **invest their energy and talents in public education** spaces to ensure the success of every Black child.



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Our Course of Action

Following the 2016 Presidential election, the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) issued a **Call to Action** to reassure our communities of our strength and resilience. Six months later, our call to action is more important than ever. As you revisit our call to action, we encourage you to remain committed to the work that lies ahead.

We remain steadfast in our belief that the outcome of this election will not paralyze our communities. The children and families we partner with and represent will not fold and crumble. We are resilient and empowered. As people seek solutions to mounting concerns and ponder what they can do to create change, we must rally our friends, family members, neighbors, families at our children's schools, faith communities, fraternities and sororities, membership organizations, community centers—every organization and assembly of leaders in our communities—to engage with greater intentionality and urgency.

Our work must begin at the local level. The National Black Child Development Institute has been working for 46 years to improve and advance the quality of life for Black children and families through education and advocacy. NBCDI continues to advocate for policies that support and positively impact our communities and oppose or inform those that do not. Although we are preparing to engage the new administration, we are not stopping there. With our National Affiliate Network, we are mobilizing locally. We have a clear agenda for action, one that will continue to challenge societal norms, change the trajectory for our children, and reshape the educational landscape in *your* neighborhood and communities across the country.

Here's how you can get started:

- 1) **Get involved in demanding better schools and early learning centers to ensure our children are receiving a high-quality education.** All of us must invest our time and talents in ensuring our children's success. There are so many traditional and nontraditional ways to get involved: chaperoning a field trip, coaching, planting a school garden, reading, teaching dance, or preparing your favorite recipe with your children's class.

Ask about the school or center's discipline policy. Ensure suspensions and expulsions

are no longer acceptable practices in the early learning centers and elementary schools in your community. [Data](#) from the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights shows that children of color are suspended at disproportionate rates. Black preschool children are 3.6 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white preschool children. These practices disrupt learning and impact the social and emotional well-being of our children. If your local school or center is suspending and expelling students ages eight and under, share this information with friends, families at the school, and other community members. Have them join you in advocating for the elimination of suspensions and expulsions, sharing your concerns with appointed and elected officials.

To assist you in this process, and ensure you know the access points and levers that you can use to demand the necessary changes, NBCDI with our partners, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Obama administration's White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, The Education Trust, and the U.S. Department of Education, released the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Parent Power Toolkit**. The toolkit is designed to better equip parents to engage and hold accountable school leaders and advocate for the elimination of suspensions and expulsions for children ages eight and under and advocate for equitable funding, resource allocation, and practices that support children receiving high quality education. You can begin using the ESSA Parent Power Toolkit today, download it [here](#).

- 2) **Talk, read, and sing** to the children you love and care about. **It can change their trajectory**. Learning begins at birth. When a child is born, his or her brain is already a quarter of the size it will be in adulthood and by the time that child is three years old, the brain is experiencing the most rapid period of growth, making this time the optimal opportunity for parents and caregivers to engage in brain-building moments. Critical to brain development in young children is their consistent interaction with their caregivers and the environment as they grow¹. Here are brain development resources and tools developed by NBCDI's partners: [VROOM](#), [Too Small to Fail](#), and the [African American Babies Coalition](#).
- 3) **Become an advocate and champion for the issues important to you and that most impact your family and community**. Ensure you and your community are aware of and understand proposed policies, regulations, and regulatory and policy changes. Be aware of your local election cycles and **VOTE** even when there isn't a presidential election. Remember, local elections determine your school superintendents, school board members, police chiefs and sheriffs, district and state's attorneys, and other officials that directly and indirectly impact children, families, and communities.

The National Black Child Development Institute, in partnership with the Obama administration's White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, also released the Early Learning Toolkit for Faith-Based and Community Leaders. This toolkit is designed to equip diverse community leaders as advocates for high quality early learning experiences for young children. Members and leaders of faith-based communities are using the toolkit to support, expand, and initiate early learning programming for young children and their families. The toolkit identifies best practices from faith-based and community organizations across the nation that are grounded in holistic approaches, designed to uplift children, families, and communities. You can begin using the Early Learning Toolkit for Faith-Based and Community Leaders today, download it [here](#).

There is power in numbers. Our presence and participation matters. How we show up, for ourselves, our children, and our communities matters. Our presence engenders infinite power, purpose, and possibility.

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. *We* are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” —President Barack Obama

Download NBCDI's [Action Agenda](#).

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Expelling Preschoolers Can Be A Pipeline Straight-To-Prison

by Janice Celeste

A large number of Black children are being expelled and suspended from daycare every year but can this type of exclusion have repercussions for life? The statistics and experts say, “Yes!” Expelling Black children from childcare can be the entry point for a preschool-to-prison pipeline, and, unfortunately, Black children are expelled and suspended more than white children on a regular basis. Our Editor-in-Chief, Janice Celeste interviewed Georgia Thompson, Vice President of the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) Affiliate Network and Training Institute and Cemeré’ James, the Vice President of Policy for the NBCDI on excluding young Black children from preschool and the profound consequences of this common practice.



Black children are more likely to be expelled from school than White children.

Q. A study by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights shows that Black preschoolers in the United States are suspended more often than White preschoolers, why is that?

A. Implicit biases could be a contributing factor as to why teachers resort to suspensions and expulsions more often with children of color which, in turn, contributes to their disproportionate representation in suspensions and expulsions. As cited in the National Black Child Development Institute’s co-authored white paper, [Point of Entry] with the Center for American Progress, “an African-American student who exhibits disruptive behavior—even if it is the same behavior exhibited by white peers—might be perceived as more disruptive because of teacher bias” (2015).

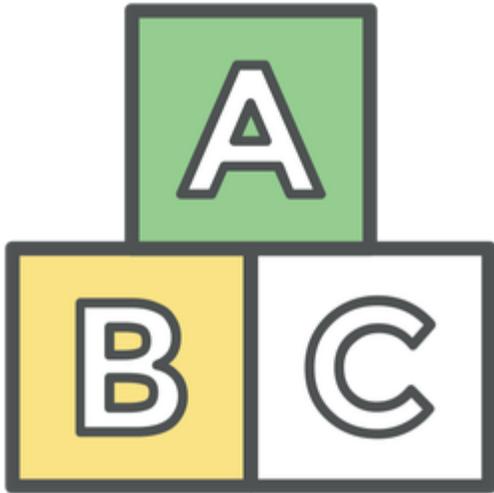
– Georgia Thompson, Vice President, NBCDI Affiliate Network and Training Institute

[bctt tweet=”Parents advocating for high-quality programs must also advocate for adequate funding...”
username=”blackparenting1”]

Q. Is this a form of racism?

A. Yes, this is a form of racism. When the biases of a teacher or administrator are contributing or primary factors in the decision to suspend or expel a young child, this constitutes a form of racism.

– Georgia Thompson, Vice President, NBCDI Affiliate Network and Training Institute



Q. What are the long-term effects or damage that can happen to a child that is expelled or suspended from preschool? Isn't it supposed to teach them a positive lesson?

A. The startling data on disproportionate suspension and expulsion that begins in preschool is that it extends through high school and is the beginning of what has been termed the “preschool to prison pipeline.” In March 2014, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights reported that Black students in kindergarten through 12th grade are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than White students. On average, five percent of White students are suspended, compared to

16 percent of Black students. This trend of harsher punishment and exclusionary discipline extends to arrest and referrals to law enforcement. While Black students represent 16 percent of student enrollment nationally, they represent 27 percent of students referred to law enforcement and 31 percent of students involved in school-related arrests. In comparison, White students represent 51 percent of enrollment, 41 percent of students referred to law enforcement, and 39 percent of those arrested. The racial bias that begins with suspension in preschool follows Black children throughout their education catapulting many of our children into juvenile justice systems later in life and possibly the criminal justice system as adults.

– Cemeré' James, Vice President, Policy

“ The best course of action for any parent is to be empowered as an advocate for change in their early learning center or school district.” – Cemeré' James, Vice President, Policy NBCDI

Q. What is a preschooler's developmental comprehension regarding suspension or expulsion? Is it, “I'm bad” and “I can't go to school?”

A. “I'm bad” or “I can't go to school” may likely be a young child's perception of his/her suspension or expulsion. Young children are still developing their concept of self and being excluded from the early learning environment, especially without exploring other alternatives to meet the need that a child's behavior is communicating without explanation and with high frequency, may very well negatively impact a child's social-emotional development.

– Georgia Thompson, Vice President, NBCDI Affiliate Network and Training Institute

[bctt tweet=”...Black children are expelled and suspended more than white children on a regular basis.”
username=”blackparenting1”]



Q. What can parents do if they feel their child is suspended unfairly or more than White children in the same care?

A. The best course of action for any parent is to be empowered as an advocate for change in their early learning center or school district. If a parent suspects maltreatment or excessively harsh discipline, he/she should raise the issue at the leadership level to address this as a systemic issue and ensure comprehensive change. Instead of

addressing isolated incidents that may likely reoccur, parents should appeal to leadership so that their child and other children do not repeatedly face unfair treatment. Parents can and should meet with the director of the early program their child is attending. If this program is a part of the public school system, the parent can contact their principal, school board members, or city or county elected officials for further investigation. For parents whose children are in private schools without public funding, they should work directly with the center director, owners, and/or board of directors.

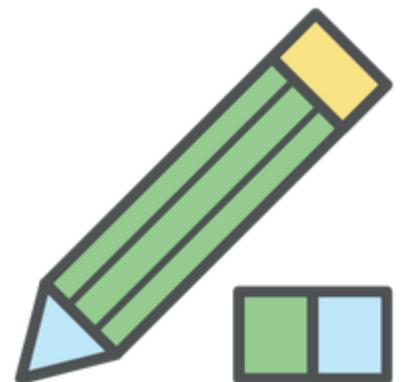
Black parents who are advocating for fair and appropriate disciplinary practices should be prepared to inform and educate school leaders. Parents should inquire about using curriculum that is positive and affirming for students of all cultures. They should ask to review written disciplinary policy or policies, be assured that all teachers understand and adhere to those policies, and that teachers are receiving professional development that will prepare them to be culturally responsive and support children’s social and emotional development. Lastly, parents should feel empowered to work with other parents and caregivers in order to seek solutions and if the issue appears to be widespread inquire about available data to pinpoint and raise awareness about disparities in disciplinary practices.

– *Cemeré’ James, Vice President, Policy*

Q. Is universal preschool the answer?

A. A high-quality early education that is accessible to all children is the answer. High-quality means that the teachers are trained on how best to support children’s social and emotional development and trained in culturally-responsive pedagogy, equipping them to be able to respond to children’s needs with developmentally appropriate practices, which lessens the likelihood of suspensions and expulsions.

– *Georgia Thompson, Vice President, NBCDI Affiliate Network and Training Institute*



A. Early care and education programs are often underfunded and many programs struggle to attract and retain talented, effective educators and provide them with effective professional development. Parents advocating for high-quality programs must also advocate for adequate funding of these programs.

– *Cemeré' James, Vice President, Policy*

Q. Is there anything else parents should know about this subject?

A. When selecting an early care and education program, parents and caregivers should feel empowered to inquire about preschool disciplinary procedures as well as curriculum and teacher training to ensure the needs of their child will be met appropriately, if enrolled. Parents and caregivers should also consult with other parents if there is a concern about a program's disciplinary policies. This may lead to the identification of any disparities that may exist in the implementation of those policies.

– *Georgia Thompson, Vice President, NBCDI Affiliate Network and Training Institute*



@GeorgiaThmpsn | Georgia S. Thompson is the Vice-President of the Affiliate Network and Training Institute for the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI). In this role, Georgia oversees the organization's National Affiliate Network and Training Institute, ensuring the Network is trained and equipped with tools and supports to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based, culturally-relevant, and trauma-informed programming at the local level to advance the mission of the national organization. Georgia holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Child Development from

Florida State University and a Master of Science degree in Human Services from Nova Southeastern University. Georgia has been in the field of Early Care and Education for over 10 years, beginning as a preschool teacher and advancing to working in professional development and quality improvement. Georgia has overseen the implementation and ongoing quality improvement of early care and education services for infants and toddlers enrolled in Early Head Start programs, training and professional development initiatives, and technical assistance provided through Quality Rating Improvement Systems for early care and education practitioners. Georgia is an experienced trainer and facilitator, having trained and presented at the state and national levels. Georgia is an advocate for high-quality education for all children, recognizing that it all begins with a firm foundation in the early years.



@NBCDICemere | **Cemeré James** recently joined the National Black Child Development Institute as Vice President of Policy. Prior to joining NBCDI, Cemeré was deputy director of the Work Support Strategies project and senior policy analyst at CLASP where she focused on strategies to increase access to public work support programs. Before joining CLASP, Cemeré was Lead Operations Specialist at Illinois Department of Human Service and, from 2009-2011, Cemeré was an inaugural fellow in the Illinois Early Childhood Fellows Program where she worked as an advocate for access to quality early childhood education and supported their strategic planning initiatives. Ms. James holds a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Chicago and a Master of Industrial Engineering and Management Science degree from Northwestern University, as well as a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from Florida A&M University.

Editor-in-Chief | **@JaniceMCeleste**





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Removing Barriers to Opportunity: Eliminating Preschool Suspensions

**By David Johns, White House Initiative on Educational
Excellence on African Americans**



I have said it before and it bears repeating: Learning starts at birth and the preparation for learning starts well before birth. The time between childbirth until about age five is among the most critical of a child's life as it is when the foundation upon which all future learning and development is built. To ensure they develop the cognitive, social and emotional skills and experiences needed to be successful in school and in life, all children must have access to high-quality early care and education programs designed to reach that goal.

This is especially true for African American students, who, in spite of a legacy of accomplishment in the face of adversity, continue to confront significant barriers to academic achievement - barriers that are unrelated to ability to learn but rather are related to opportunity to learn. According to the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection survey, African American male students received a disproportionate number of suspensions, detentions, and call-outs, at all levels.⁸ A recent Kids Count policy report published by the Casey Foundation similarly found that African American students face the highest barriers to opportunity in our society.

Opportunities to support African American students - and other scholars from poor, racial and ethnic minority communities - are available early in their lives. We need to take advantage of them. In addition, while we are focused on expanding access to high-quality early care and education programs and services, we must be equally vigilant about ensuring that we stop the practice of removing children from, or otherwise pushing them out of, the very spaces designed to ensure their success.

More than 8,000 public preschool students from across the country were suspended at least once, with Black children, and boys more specifically, representing a disproportionate number of those suspended. Black children account for only about one-fifth (18 percent) of all preschool students but nearly half of all preschool students who were suspended more than once. It is worth noting that boys of all races account for 54 percent of preschool students in the Kids Count report but represent more than 80 percent of those suspended more than once. While some may decide to debate the merits of suspending preschoolers altogether, the data regarding the impact of suspension on behavior and achievement is clear - it does not work to improve either. Call to Action: A Critical Need for Designing Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion suggests that school districts are continuing to use out-of-school suspensions - even for minor disciplinary infractions - despite evidence that these suspensions tend to exacerbate problem behaviors and may, in fact, lead directly to academic problems.

Beginning at birth, all children deserve to feel safe, nurtured and supported in the spaces designed to ensure their cognitive, social and emotional development. We must work to end disciplinary practices that result in any child being removed from high-quality learning and development programs and services, temporarily or otherwise. The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans supports efforts to eliminate preschool suspension and other practices that negatively impact the achievement and development of our youngest learners.

This commentary was originally published in "[Being Black Is Not a Risk Factor: Statistics and Strengths-Based Solutions in the State of Wisconsin.](#)"



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Through the Lens of Culture: Envisioning Effective Powerful Partnerships Between Black Families and Early Childhood Programs

By Dr. Aisha Ray, Erikson Institute



This essay asserts that the task of engagement with Black families requires acknowledging and harnessing the passion, energy, values, beliefs, and commitment Black families bring to rearing and educating their children and partnering with them to create meaningful, powerful and authentic relationships that strengthen Black child outcomes.

To do so will require developing a strengths perspective and dismantling deficit perceptions regarding Black families, understanding Black culture(s) and diversity, developing the capacity of early childhood practitioners, administrators and other professionals to work effectively with Black families, and committing time, energy, hard work and resources to building and sustaining family-school partnerships.

The need to strengthen Black family-school relationships is based on five factors:
1) the prevalence of Black children (birth to age 8) in non-familial care and

education settings in the United States; 2) the persistence of racial disparities and poorer educational and developmental outcomes for Black children, compared to Asian American and White children on a range of developmental (e.g., low birth weight) and educational (e.g., 4th grade reading and math achievement) measures; 3) the demographic imperative in which children of color, including Black children, are transforming the United States into a nation without a single ethnic/racial majority; 4) growing inequality which threatens the economic, political and social well-being of the nation; and 5) research evidence that suggests effective school and family partnerships strengthen educational outcomes, including those for children in poverty.

Research demonstrates that when families and schools cooperate, children have better educational outcomes, so it should not be surprising that Black children benefit significantly when their families actively engage in their education. In addition to experiencing academic gains, students whose families are engaged in early care and education programs also adapt better to school, have fewer behavior problems, attend school regularly, complete homework, and have better social skills and higher self-esteem. These gains are further extended by linking students and their families with resources in their broader community. Parents and families accomplish this through the learning opportunities they provide at home and in the community at-large, as well as through involvement with their child's school. Meaningful involvement also serves to increase parents' social influence as they interact with other parents and teachers, thereby enhancing their understanding of school practices, policies, and resources. Developing mechanisms to promote high quality and intensive school-family-community engagement initiatives should be one of Illinois' top priorities in its efforts to strengthen the educational outcomes of young Black children.

This is an excerpt from an essay originally published in "[Being Black Is Not a Risk Factor: Statistics and Strengths-Based Solutions in the State of Illinois.](#)"



4 Disturbing Facts About Preschool Suspension

By [Rasheed Malik](#) | Posted on March 30, 2017, 9:43 am



AP/Rich Pedroncelli

Preschoolers Raymond Gilliam, left, Devon Edwards, center, and Hilda Torres look at the butterfly Edwards made for a Mother's Day card at a publicly funded preschool class in Sacramento, California, May 2006.

Several years ago, when Zakiya Sankara-Jabar's 3-year-old son was repeatedly suspended from preschool, she felt like a bad parent. "I started to think that there was something inherently wrong with my son," says Sankara-Jabar, who is now a parent advocate for race equity in schools. Her son was eventually expelled from his preschool, forcing Sankara-Jabar to drop out of college. While she now knows that their experience was likely due to [implicit biases](#), it's little consolation. In a phone interview with the author, Sankara-Jabar recalled the ordeal as "a lot of toxic stress and trauma, not just for the children but even for the parents."

In the wake of [pioneering research by Yale University's Walter Gilliam](#), the federal government started collecting data on public preschool suspension and expulsion in 2011. According to the [most recent data](#) from the U.S. Department of Education, 47 percent of the preschoolers who received suspensions or expulsions in the 2013-14 school year were African American, even though they made up only 19 percent of preschool enrollment. In total, nearly 7,000 3- and 4-year-olds were suspended or expelled from public preschools during the same school year.

This column highlights four of the most important, and disturbing, facts to know about preschool suspension and expulsion.

1. It pathologizes normal child behavior

Children at the young ages of 3 or 4 often test boundaries and act out, particularly when adjusting to new social environments such as preschool. [According to the American Academy of Pediatrics](#), it's perfectly normal for a preschooler's frustration or anger to manifest as physical conflict. When caregivers correct this ordinary behavior in a way that promotes empathy, it's a healthy part of a child's social development. Labeling a young child as violent or disruptive and calling parents to pick up their child sends the wrong message to the child, and it could even lead to unnecessary medical or psychological interventions.

In Sankara-Jabar's case, that was the course that her son's preschool recommended. Although her son's tantrums were typical for his age, the preschool asked that he be evaluated in a medical setting. When she refused, she was told she would need to find another preschool for her son. Quite often, this is what preschool expulsion looks like.

In working with other parents on this issue, Sankara-Jabar says, "I have seen parents get bullied into medicating their children and signing them up for special needs classes. And this is more pronounced with African American boys." Yet in 2014, an [Indiana University analysis of the literature](#) on racial differences in child behavior showed that children of color and white children act out at the same rates.

2. It can be driven by implicit racial bias

Last year, in a study that used sophisticated eye-tracking technology, Yale researchers led by Gilliam found that [preschool teachers tend to more closely observe African American children](#) than white children when they are expecting challenging behavior. The researchers believe that this could help explain the disproportionate levels of discipline experienced by African American boys, who [represent](#) 19 percent of male enrollment but receive 45 percent of male suspensions.

Researchers describe this error in judgment as implicit bias, and it can be observed in preschool teachers of all races. In fact, the study found that African American teachers held African American students to a higher standard of behavior than white teachers. As an advocate, Sankara-Jabar has noticed this bias, saying, "It's almost like people have sort of been socialized that African Americans, and African American males in particular, are just inherently bad. Like they're born bad."

3. It's more common in school districts that still use corporal punishment*

The new CAP analysis also finds that in the same school year, schools that reported using corporal punishment as a disciplinary tactic suspended or expelled preschoolers at twice the rate of schools that did not use corporal punishment. To be clear, these schools are not necessarily using corporal punishment in their preschool

classrooms. Nonetheless, this finding reflects an institutional reliance on harsh discipline rather than the more effective practice of redirecting disruptive behavior. When teachers are given the supports and the right tools to help children with challenging behavior, they can [lower rates of hyperactivity, restlessness, and externalizing behaviors](#).

4. It may be an even bigger problem in private preschools

The only recent data available on preschool discipline comes from public schools. But as in Sankara-Jabar's case, it is likely that most instances of suspension and expulsion happen in private preschools. In her experience, Sankara-Jabar notes that "this becomes a child care nightmare for parents because their kids are constantly being kicked out of these private preschools." [The only study](#) that has collected data on disciplinary rates in private preschools found that in 2005, the rates of expulsion in private preschools were twice as high as those seen in public preschools. Without accountability and reliable data reporting, private preschools remain free to discriminate against families of color.

Conclusion

In recent years, the positive effects of high-quality preschool have been [repeatedly documented](#). As more cities and states attempt to provide public preschool, strong civil rights protections must be in place to ensure that the destructive practice of preschool suspension does not become more widespread. Meanwhile, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, the office responsible for collecting data on the practice in public schools, has been [targeted by the Trump administration for downsizing](#). Furthermore, researchers have yet to fully diagnose the scope of the problem in private preschool settings.

The good news is that with the right training and professional supports for preschool teachers, the normal yet challenging behaviors of 3- and 4-year-olds can be redirected in positive ways that help them develop the social and emotional skills necessary for learning. Armed with the new cutting-edge research on implicit bias in preschools, many early educators are working hard to end the practices of suspension and expulsion. After all, preschool should be a welcoming place where children grow and develop normally, free from society's stereotypes and prejudice.

** Note: Author's calculations using the U.S. Department of Education's 2013-14 [Civil Rights Data Collection](#). For more information on preschool suspension and expulsion, see "[Point of Entry: The Preschool-to-Prison Pipeline](#)."*

Rasheed Malik is a Policy Analyst for the Early Childhood Policy team at the Center for American Progress.



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Progress in Eliminating Early Learning Suspensions and Expulsions: A Win for Colorado's Youngest Learners



BCDI-Denver President, Cassandra Johnson provides testimony regarding the importance of the "School Discipline for Preschool through Second Grade" Bill.

Congratulations to the National Black Child Development Institute's Denver Affiliate for providing testimony in support of House Bill 17-1210, "School Discipline for Preschool through Second Grade," and House Bill 17-1211, "Discipline Strategies Pilot Program" on Monday, March 13, 2017. Over the past year, Black Child Development Institute-Denver (BCDI-Denver)

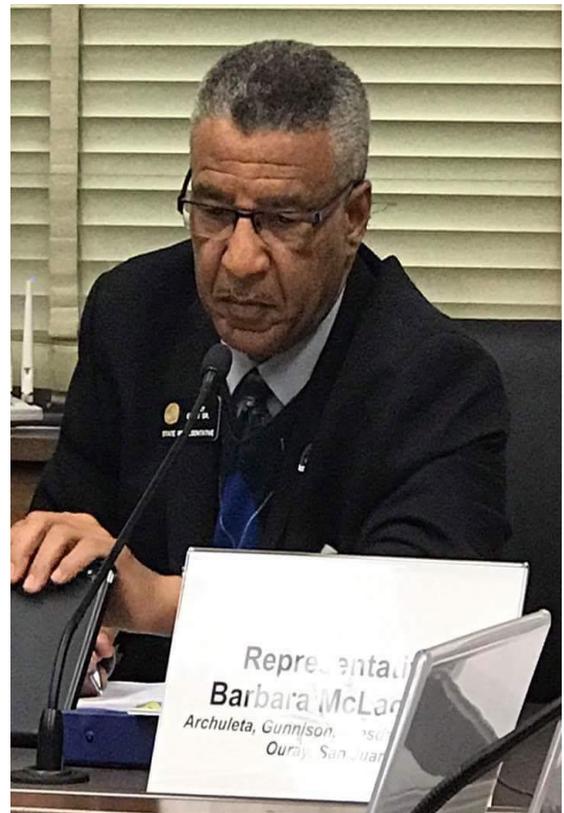
has collaborated with elected officials and other child advocacy organizations to address the suspension and expulsion crisis in Colorado's early childhood education programs and promote children's healthy cognitive and social-emotional development.

In Fall 2015, BCDI-Denver partnered with other child advocacy organizations to form the **Equity in Early Childhood Coalition**, dedicated to advancing policy change for children in the state of Colorado. Members of the coalition include Clayton Early Learning, Colorado Children's Campaign, Hope Center, Padres Y Jovenes Unidos, and the Institute for Racial Equity & Excellence. For the past year, this Coalition has met monthly with Colorado legislators to plan for and draft legislation to ban preschool expulsions, limit suspensions, and require all Colorado districts to adopt prevention and early intervention strategies to reduce the need for early childhood and early elementary suspensions.

The passage of House Bill 17-1211 created the Discipline Strategies Pilot Program (pilot program). Representative James Coleman introduced House Bill 17-1211 to address the root of the disproportionate referral of Black children for suspensions and expulsions: teachers' need for culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate discipline strategies. Representative Coleman's district is in Denver where educators are 3.1 times more likely to suspend or expel students of color than their white peers. The pilot program will provide funding to school districts, boards of cooperative services, and charter schools for professional development for teachers in pre-K to 3rd grade to use culturally-responsive and developmentally-appropriate methods of school discipline.

While the Colorado House of Representative's Education Committee demonstrated bipartisan support of House Bill 17-1210, "School Discipline for Preschoolers through Second Graders," the bill was not passed into law. The progress of this legislation, which would have banned expulsions and limited suspensions in state-funded programs and kindergarten through second grade, demonstrates major progress toward purging the preschool to prison pipeline for all children in Colorado. NBCDI commends BCDI-Denver for fighting to protect our children.

If you are interested in working to eliminate suspensions and expulsions for early learners in your community, please contact your local NBCDI Affiliate. To learn more about our national initiative, email NBCDI Vice President of Policy, Cemeré James, at cjames@nbcidi.org.



*"I'm supporting this bill because we must come to terms with the fact that Black and Brown kids [can] no longer [be considered] disposable."
—Representative Thomas 'Tony' Exum*



Parent Power BootCamp Call to Action Plan

| | Goal | Desired Outcome | Potential Challenges/Solutions |
|----|--|--|--|
| 1. | Example: Provide teachers with professional development on social-emotional development and age-appropriate, culturally-responsive practices. | Ensure that all teachers have high-quality professional development that prepares them to deliver culturally-responsive and age-appropriate instruction. | Challenge: Professional development requires funding. Solution: Advocate for an increase in funding for early childhood education at the federal and state levels and for required professional development on culturally-responsive and age-appropriate instruction. |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |

