

Position Statement
From the Mississippi Department of Human Services
On Social, Emotional and Behavioral Health and the Use of Suspension and Expulsion in Early
Care and Education Settings

All child care providers should establish practices for promoting developmentally appropriate social-emotional-behavioral health practices and procedures for discipline and intervention. These procedures and practices shall be clearly communicated to all staff, families, and community partners.

The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD) will work with child care providers and other Mississippi early childhood stakeholders to invest in child care workforce preparation and development. This process shall be designed to ensure that early childhood programs promote children's social-emotional and behavioral health and eliminate or severely limit the use of expulsion, suspension, and other exclusionary discipline practices. This process shall include the use of a percentage of funds authorized by the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 for activities—such as entry-level credentials; higher education; statewide early childhood mental health consultation; statewide endorsements for infants, early childhood, and family mental health specialists; statewide models of positive behavior intervention and supports; and career pathways—that enhance the quality of child care programs and strengthen Mississippi's child care workforce.

DECCD recommends that child care providers limit the use of expulsion, suspension, and other exclusionary discipline practices; these practices should only be used as a last resort. Child care providers should document evidence of behavioral interventions. Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional have been exhausted and it has been determined that transitioning a child to another program is necessary for the well-being of the child or his or her peers, providers are encouraged to take a series of documented steps to ensure a smooth transition into another setting that offers a rich social context and opportunities for interactions with socially competent peers so that the child's learning and social skills practice are optimized in a natural environment. If the child has a disability and is receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the provider and DECCD shall ensure that additional applicable procedural safeguards and requirements are met.