Implicit Bias and Pre-K Expulsion-Suspension

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These are all our children. We will profit by, or pay for, whatever they become.

James Baldwin
Young children are being suspended and expelled from preschool at alarming rates.
Preschool children are suspended 3 times children more than kindergarten through 12\textsuperscript{th} grades (Gilliam, 2005)
What is a suspension?

- Excluding a child from the learning process; from the classroom; from the school premises
- Student is sent home early
- Child is placed on a modified schedule
- Student is not a “good fit” and asked to leave the school/program
**Suspension:** a “disciplinary action that is administered as a consequence of a student’s inappropriate behavior, requires that a student absent him/herself from the classroom or from the school for a specified period of time” (Morrison and Skiba, 2001, p. 174).
What is Disproportionality?

Disproportionality occurs when one group is overrepresented or underrepresented in a particular situation or category, compared the percentage of that group in the general population (Coutinho, 2006).
The OCR (2016) Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality:

• Boys represent 54% of the preschool population but 78% of those suspended.

(United States Department of Education, 2016)
The OCR (2016) Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality:

- African American preschoolers are 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than their White peers.

(United States Department of Education, 2016)
The OCR (2016)

African American girls are 20% of preschool female population but 54% of girls suspended from preschool

(United States Department of Education, 2016)
The OCR (2018)
Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality:

• Boys are 54% of the preschool population but more than three-quarters of those who were spanked or paddled, and 81 percent of the preschoolers who were suspended more than once.

(United States Department of Education, 2018)
The New OCR (2018)
Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality:

• African American preschoolers are 19% of the preschool populations and comprise 46% of suspensions.

(United States Department of Education, 2018)
In Illinois, 40% of child care providers reported suspending infants and toddlers. Those are babies that are still in diapers!
In North Dakota, 20% of ECE programs expelled children. Of those expelled, 53% were infants and toddlers and 31% were preschool children. (North Dakota State Data Center, 2008).
Children in special education are twice as likely as the overall population to receive either out-of-school or in-school suspensions (Texans Care for Children, 2018).
Nationally, “across all types of settings, the average school day sees roughly 250 instances of a preschooler being suspended or expelled” (Center for American Progress, 2017).
Black students made up only 18 percent of those enrolled in the schools sampled, they accounted for 35 percent of those suspended once, 46 percent of those suspended more than once and 39 percent of all expulsions. Overall, Black students were three and a half times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their White peers (Lewin, 2012).

Let’s look at K-12 data
Of all students involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement 70% were Hispanic or Black
Blacks are 18 percent of K-12 enrollment and they are:

- 35 percent of those suspended once,
- 46 percent of those suspended more than once and,
- 39 percent of all expulsions (Lewin, 2012).
There has been little attention to the number of children who are physically disciplined at school by teachers.
Currently, there are 19 states that legitimize the use of corporal punishment in its public schools and 48 states that allow corporal punishment in private schools (Gershoff & Font, 2016).
States the Allow Corporal Punishment in Schools

Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wyoming.
During the 2011-2012 school year, over 160,000 children were hit at school, as a form of discipline.
The same patterns of disproportionality that exists in suspensions are present in the administration of corporal punishment (United States Department of Education, 2014).
African American children are nearly 51% more likely to receive corporal punishment than White children.

Boys and children with disabilities are also physically disciplined at disproportionate rates (Gershoff & Font, 2016; United States Department of Education, 2014).
Why Does This Happen??
Teachers do not feel they have the tools to address challenging behaviors in their classrooms
(Hemmeter et al., 2006; Joseph, Strain, & Skinner, 2004).
Suspensions: A Tool or a Weapon
Young children who are suspended are

- 10 times likely to end up in the juvenile justice system.
- Drop out of school,
- Become disengaged from the learning process,
- And are likely to be suspended again and again.

And THIS is where the Preschool to PRISON pipeline begins

(Center for American Progress, 2017).
I was one of those children!

I was suspended at least 7 times a year from the time I started school.
I was suspended for things like digging a hole on the playground, I wanted to see if China was really on the other side of the earth. FOR THAT, I was labeled destructive.
After a lesson on maps, when the teacher told us to imagine being a bird, I climbed on the roof of the auditorium to get a ‘bird’s eye’ view, AND after the firemen got me down, I was suspended. FOR THAT I was labeled incorrigible.
Once, I took the baby dolls apart, I wanted to see how the body parts fit together FOR THAT, I was labeled a demon
Once, I snuck into the boys bathroom, I wanted to know how they got to pee standing up, FOR THAT, I was viewed as sexually perverted.
Walter Gilliam, national expert on preschool suspensions, explained: “I’ve never seen a suspension or expulsion where the teachers and parents knew and liked each other”.
IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Nurturing and Supportive Relationships
Barriers to Building Relationships: Children’s Behavior
Let’s look at behaviors— What do children do when they get upset?
What do adults do when they get upset?
We can expect children to be children as adults, what’s our excuse?
What if we shift our focus from children’s behaviors to the behavior of adults.
What if my teachers saw me as a geologist rather than being destructive?

As a topographer with an interest in creating maps, rather than incorrigible?

What if they saw me as a scientist rather than a demon?

Or as a doctor, specializing in anatomy rather than a sexual pervert?
THE key to managing the difficult behaviors of young children is to shift our thinking to manage our own behaviors and responses to behaviors.
• Awareness of our behavior and responses to the behavior of others

• Recognize our own hot buttons and when they’re pushed

• WHAT children are we responding to and why

• Our body language
Hot Buttons
Behavior is defined by the person most annoyed by it.
Personal & Cultural Beliefs Shape Attitudes About Challenging Behaviors

• Look at your “Hot Buttons”

• Where might there be cultural disconnects?
Cultural Disconnects

• Most children don’t come to school knowing what teachers expect them to do.

• Most teachers are not aware of the cultural expectations of the child at home.

• This could be the child’s first experience in outside of home and family.

• There may be differences in families’ and teachers’ expectations of children’s behavior.
Cultural Disconnects Lead to disproportionality in disciplinary practices
Hey girl and then I told him, is you crazy?
• How do we ensure this little girl’s sweet spirit is embraced?
• How do we honor who she is in our classrooms?
How do we honor Mateo in our classroom without breaking his spirit?

How Do We Ensure the Success for Mateo?
Turtle Technique

Step 1: Recognize that you feel angry.

Step 2: "Think" Stop.

Step 3: Go into shell. Take 3 deep breaths. And think calm, coping thoughts.

Step 4: Come out of shell when calm and thinking of a solution.
Turtle Technique

Step 1
Recognize that you feel angry.

Step 2
“Think” Stop.

Step 3
Go into shell:
Take 3 deep breathes.
And think calm, coping thoughts.

Step 4
Come out of shell when calm and thinking of a solution.
Barriers to Connecting With Children & Families
Implicit Bias
Warm Up Activity
Warm Up

Activity

Context matters!
Implicit bias is the mental process resulting in feelings and attitudes about people based on race, age, and appearance. It is an unconscious process and we are not consciously aware of the negative racial biases that develop over the course of our lifetime. Implicit bias supports stereotypes such as Black males being dangerous.
THE LADDER OF INFERENCE

I TAKE ACTIONS based on my beliefs
I ADOPT BELIEFS about the world
I DRAW CONCLUSIONS
I MAKE ASSUMPTIONS (based on the meanings I added)
I ADD MEANINGS (cultural & personal)
I SELECT "DATA" from what I observe

Peter Senge - from *The Fifth Discipline*

* Our beliefs affect what data we select next time.
High Level Inference

I draw conclusions and take action based on my beliefs

I make assumptions

I add meanings and labels (Personal/Cultural)

Low Level Inference

I select data (Conscious/Unconscious)

Directly Observable Data

Rosemarie walks in and does not speak to me

We will never be treated fairly by Rosemarie

Rosemarie thinks she is better than us.

Rosemarie has an attitude and doesn’t like me.

Rosemarie rushes past me without speaking.
High Level Inference

I draw conclusions and take action based on my beliefs ►

I know we’re going to have to put him on a behavioral plan

Low Level Inference

I make assumptions ►

He’s probably aggressive with the other children.

I add meanings and labels ► (Personal/Cultural)

I think he has an attitude, I’d better watch him.

I select data ► (Conscious/Unconscious)

This child is pretty big and rough

Directly Observable Data
I notice that child did not use Ms. to address me.

I think this is disrespectful.

I assume that she comes from a family that doesn’t value manners, education, or school very much.

I know this student is going to be a problem and the parents won’t be much help.

I draw conclusions and take action based on my beliefs ➔

I make assumptions ➔

I add meanings and labels ➔ (Personal/Cultural)

I select data ➔ (Conscious/Unconscious)

Directly Observable Data
My student won’t address me by “Ms.” in class.
It is important to understand the causes of implicit racial bias and intentionally work to bring it to the conscious level in order to mitigate the negative consequences.
Implicit Bias

Hidden

- Implicit racial bias resides in our “unconscious mind,” the part of the brain that many researchers believe is beyond our direct control

Less Egalitarian

- Unconscious attitudes are less egalitarian than what we explicitly think about race

Self-reinforcing

- Our refusal to talk about and confront issues of race reinforces implicit racial bias

Tom Rudd, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
How does this impact the preschool classroom?
Implicit Bias in Preschool Teachers

Preschool teachers were asked to watch a video clip of 4 children to anticipate challenging behaviors. Children included a black girl and boy, a white boy and girl, all child actors.
We are interested in learning about how teachers detect challenging behavior in the classroom. Sometimes this involves seeing behavior before it becomes problematic. The video segments you are about to view are of preschoolers engaging in various activities. Some clips may or may not contain challenging behaviors. Your job is to press the enter key on the external keypad every time you see a behavior that could become a potential challenge.
The Black boy was watched more than any other child. Forty Two percent of teachers reported that he required more attention than the other children.
The Black girl was watched more often than the White children.
White children were watched less than Black children.
The results were true with both White and Black teachers.
Why Don’t We Want to Talk About Race?

“We have become so politically correct that we don’t know what to say and when to say it. We don’t know what to say to anyone anymore.”

Lee Jones, Florida State University.
• Racial Etiquette: Not polite to discuss that which makes us uncomfortable (Omi and Winant, 2002).

• Saying “We’re all the same”, or “I don’t see color” fails to acknowledge difference others experience (Harries, 2014).
We Don’t Know Each Other!
Blue Eyes
Your Child’s Hair Stinks!
Danger of Color-blind ideology
Racial blindness promotes the fallacy that people are beyond bias and racism, ignores racial disparities, and places blame on the behaviors of communities of color.
DIFFERENT IS NOT DEFICIT

Let’s Talk About Culture
What is Culture?

Culture:
• The way we live
• Values, mores, customs
• Behavioral expectations
• Belief Systems
• Communication styles
• Traditions that are shared and passed between generations
Culture impacts the way children:

- Learn
- Cope
- Solve problems
- Communicate

Viewing the child through this cultural context provides an understanding of the child and the factors that influence behaviors

(Gay, Geneva 2010. Culturally Responsive Teaching)
Elements: Of Culture At School

1. The Culture that Already Exists
2. The Culture We Bring
3. The Culture That is Created

We must be aware of our own cultural framework and context

The Cultural Background We Bring With Us:

- Cultural Practices
- Beliefs and perceptions
- Personal Identities

Kozleski, Elizabeth (2010). Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters! Equity Alliance
Elements of My Culture

• Share 3 aspects of your culture that you bring to work with you.
Connecting With Children Using Culturally Responsive Practices

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS
Culturally Responsive Strengths-Based Approach

• Teachers focus on what children
  • Know
  • Understand
  • Can do.

• Teachers know children’s strengths
  • Strengths
  • Gifts
  • Talents

Wright & Counsell, 2018
Culturally Responsive Teachers Are Intentional Teachers

• Teachers are not neutral in the education of children.

• They must be vested in the success of each child.

Wright & Counsell, 2018
Culturally Responsive Practices

• Centers the Child’s cultural authenticity, including
  • Identity
  • Agency
  • Lived experiences

Wright & Counsell, 2018
Our Focus

• Promise
• Potential
• Possibility

Wright & Counsell, 2018
“Adultification” of Black & Brown Boys

- Even when teachers have knowledge of child development they still:
  - Overestimate the age of children of color by up to 4.5 years
  - View them as less innocent, as criminal, and more culpable than their White peers

Goff, et al, 2014; Wright & Counsell, 2018
Black Girls

As early as 5 years old Black Girls are seen as:
• Needing less nurturing and comfort
• More independent
• More sexualized criminal, than their White peers

Epstein, et al, 2014; Wright & Counsell, 2018
How do we ensure children of color are seen as:

• Innocent
• Deserving of protection
• CHILDREN!

Wright & Counsell, 2018
The Expectation Gap

ZERO TO THREE
National Parent Survey
The Expectation Gap
Parent Voices, Key Takeaways, Infographics, and more!

#ParentForward

Takeaways for Parents

What’s Going On in Your Baby’s Mind in the First Year?
5 Ways to Put Brain Science into Action

1. Babies are determined detectives. Your baby can tell how you feel and will respond accordingly.

2. Very young babies already have very big feelings.
Majority of parents believe children start developing self-control early in life – much earlier than brain science indicates is possible.
The Expectation Gap

Having expectations and rules for children that aren’t developmentally appropriate.
The Expectation Gap

The “disconnect between what is expected of children and the reality of their actual abilities and brain development to manage and exert self-control with their emotions and body” (Zero to Three, 2017).
• More than half of parents thought children can resist doing something that is forbidden before age 3.

• Nearly half of parents said their children could resist breaking the forbidden rule at age 3 or older.
The Reality

Children do not develop impulse and self-control until 3.5 – 4 years of age.
Young children lack self-control and will sometimes break the rules and test limits.
Age Appropriate Expectations
2 to 3 Year Olds

• Becomes easily frustrated when things don't turn out as expected.
• Begin to test the limits of their behavior.
• May throw tantrums.
• Establishes friendships.
• Becomes independent and finds own limits.
• Wanting to please adults.
• Will follow rules to please adults.
• Able to follow simple rules.
• Beginning to comprehend the relationship between actions and consequence
Strategies to Support Behavior

• Have clear, simple rules
• Praise good behavior
• Be consistent in managing behavior. Use the same technique rather than a different one each time.
Preschoolers 4 to 5 Years Old

• Asks questions constantly and becomes more critical.
• Compares selves to others.
• Make simple judgements (good/bad, win/lose).
• Begins to understand consequences of their behavior.
• Uses words to hurt others.
• Needs encouragement to support self-esteem.
• Learns how to be a friend.
• Becomes very competitive.
• Able to make appropriate decisions before acting.
Strategies to Support Behavior

• Explain what you want your child to do and why.
• Don’t have too many rules.
• Teach expectations
• Provide many opportunities to practice
• Use specific praise
Activities for Developing Impulse Control

• Simon Says
• Red Light, Green Light
• Hide N’ Seek
• Freeze (Dance until the music stops)
• Duck, Duck, Goose
• Motor Games –
  • go Fast, then Slow, Stop, Jump, etc.
• Counting – Objects and Counting 1 – 10, etc.

(Corinne, 2017)
Behavioral Expectations

• When setting behavioral norms and expectations consider:
• Who decides normative behaviors?
• Is culture considered when behavioral expectations are decided?
• How are children encouraged to manage emotion, control impulses, develop empathy and promote their own interests within their cultural norms?
Intentionally teach children social skills.
Teach them HOW to share, rather than saying, “You need to share”.
Teach them how to initiate play.
Teach them how to take turns.
Give them many opportunities to practice using those skills.
Reinforce them every time we used those skills.
Challenging behaviors are greatly reduced!
Use engaging academic instruction
Consider the cultural and learning needs of the children. (Sullivan, 2016)
Focus more on learning than on teaching

Children’s learning is seen as the primary outcome (Sullivan, 2016).
Children are active, let them move! (Sullivan, 2016)
Let children talk and solve problems (Sullivan, 2016)
Questioning is encouraged

Teachers don’t have all the answers

Provide opportunities for shared exploration

(Sullivan, 2016)
Have high expectations for all children (Sullivan, 2016)
Respect children, their families, and their communities

(Sullivan, 2016)
Self Control

How you respond is KEY!
Reducing Disproportionality
Encouraging the Heart  (Kouzes & Posner)
Culturally Responsive Practices
Culturally Responsive Teachers Are Intentional Teachers

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• They must be vested in the success of each child.

Wright & Counsell, 2018
Culturally Responsive Strengths-Based Approach

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• Teachers know children’s
  • Strengths
  • Gifts
  • Talents

Wright & Counsell, 2018
Culturally Responsive Teaching Characteristics

**Respect**
- Instruction that values and acknowledges what children know before entering the classroom

**Responsive**
- Teacher’s ability to develop behaviors that value every student’s knowledge and experience

**Relevance**
- The degree to which instruction reflects students’ experiences

**Rigor**
- High expectations for all children that are challenging and engaging

Wright & Counsell, 2018
Anti-Deficit Approach

Developed to understand the achievement of Black Males

- Rather than use negative information on why children are failing, it asks how they’ve succeeded

- Relies on information and research that shows how children of color succeed

- Identifies factors based on children’s success.
## Reframing Using an Anti-Deficit Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• This child doesn’t know how to show compassion to his peers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• This child cannot sit still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I see how he cares for his brother. How can this translate into the classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I notice this child is engaged even when moving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reframing Activity
Critical Reflection

- Awareness of yourself
- Understanding your values, passions, preferences and world views
- Acknowledging the biases and assumptions you have that influence your attitudes

Source: Gardenswartz and Rowe EID
Using Culturally Responsive Practices
Why is it important to consider culturally responsive practices?

• Behavioral expectations are developed in the context of culture, family, and community.

• When the behavioral expectations of the school is different from those of the home and community, cultural disconnects can lead to unwanted behavior that is preventable.
Seven Practices of Culturally Responsive Teaching
Principle One

“Kids get it, that we get them”

Children are honored in their cultural connections

- The children are represented in:
  - Routines and Activities
  - Stories
  - People
  - Visuals
- Children feel honored, recognized, and seen

Gary Howard, 7 Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching. You Tube
Principle Two

“Kids get it, that we like them”

Teachers are personally culturally inviting:

• Kids understand that we enjoy them and enjoy being with them

• Teachers have comfortable and positive conversations with children about cultural traditions and activities.

• Teachers develop personal, meaningful and positive relationships with each child.

Gary Howard, 7 Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching. You Tube
Principle Three

“School looks like me”

- Classrooms are physically and culturally inviting
- Children’s families are represented in the classroom in photos, family books, bulletin board.
- Pictures, books, games, reflect the culture of the children
- Children’s work is attractively displayed.

Gary Howard, 7 Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching. You Tube
Principle Four
“Catch kids being good”

Children’s development and efforts are reinforced

• Teachers see children from a strength-based lens.

• Teachers look for and acknowledge the positive behaviors of children.

• Children are perceived as smart and capable learners.
Principle Five
“Singing in harmony with the kid’s song”

Strategies are adjusted to meet the needs of unique learning and cultural styles of the children

- Children do not have to change who they are to fit into the program.
- Creating program-wide rules that are consistent with the family’s cultural expectations.
- Using strategies that are congruent with the child’s family and community.

Gary Howard, 7 Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching. You Tube
Principle Six
“Respect begins with the teacher”

Guidance is caring and consistent

• Children are intentionally taught culturally appropriate prosocial skills and emotional competencies

• Children are taught program-wide expectations

• Expectations are clear, implemented consistently, and reinforced regularly

• Guidance is instructive, not punitive

Gary Howard, 7 Principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching. You Tube
Principle Seven
“Child-Centered Learning”

Instruction is individual as well collective

• Friendship skills are taught and reinforced

• Teachers individualize instruction based on child needs.

• Teachers support peers in helping their friends learn and practice social skills
Risk Factors for Suspensions: BBB+D