
STATE LEGISLATIVE APPROACHES TO TRAUMA AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN THE EARLY YEARS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2019



STATE POLICY APPROACHES TO ADDRESS CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

- Mandatory or recommended screenings
 - Healthy surveys
 - Developmental screenings
- Trauma-informed practices
 - Evidence-based procedures
 - Culturally and linguistically responsive
 - Developmentally appropriate
- Professional Development
 - Teachers and early educators
 - Administrative staff
 - Other child-serving adults
- Task forces and study groups
 - Gathering data
 - Making recommendations

STATE EXAMPLES

Nevada Senate Bill 80 (enacted 2019)

- Based on the West Virginia Handle with Care Program model
- Created a notification system for law enforcement to report when a child enrolled in public school has been exposed to trauma
- Provided for subsequent notification of designated school staff

Oklahoma Senate Bill 1517 (enacted 2018)

- Created the Task Force on Trauma-Informed Care to study and make recommendations to the legislature on best practices with respect to children and youth who have experienced trauma
- Interagency membership spans health, early and K-12 education, criminal justice, academic and tribal sectors

STATE EXAMPLES CONT'D

Kentucky Senate Bill 1 (enacted 2019)

- Requires each public school to:
 - Adopt trauma-informed practices recommended by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration;
 - Create a trauma-informed team to identify and assist students who have been impacted by trauma; and
 - Provide training to teachers and staff on recognizing and understanding trauma

Iowa Senate Bill 2113 (enacted 2018)

- Requires annual training for all K-12 school personnel on identifying ACEs and strategies to mitigate toxic stress responses

Ohio House Bill 318 (enacted 2018)

- Requires all teacher preparation programs for preschool through fifth grade to include instruction on the impact of trauma and toxic stress on learning behavior

STATE APPROACHES TO SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN THE EARLY YEARS

Context:

- Disproportionate use of suspensions and expulsions in preschools and early elementary grades, especially among students of color
 - African Americans comprised 20 percent of public preschool enrollment in school year 2013-14, but represented 53 percent of preschoolers suspended more than once¹
 - Some preschools may use informal or “soft” suspensions by requesting parent pick up²

State Strategies:

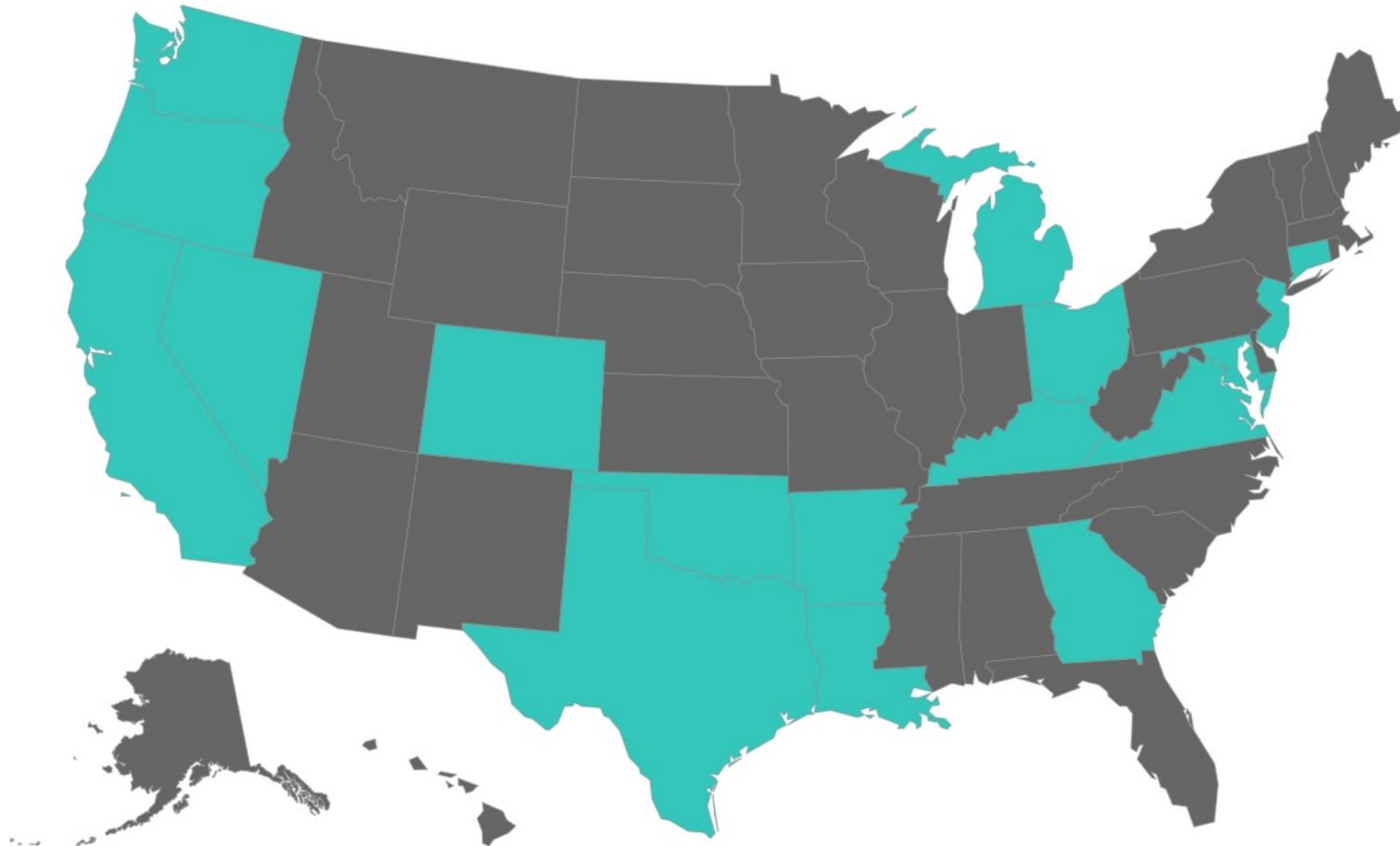
- Prohibit or severely limit exclusionary discipline for certain age groups
- Limit the length of suspensions
- Restrict the violations for which suspensions and expulsions may be given
- Require the use of positive behavior interventions and restorative practices before suspension can be considered

¹U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Data Collection 2013-14*)

²*Building a Comprehensive State Policy Strategy to Prevent Expulsion from Early Learning Settings.* State Capacity Building Center, Administration of Children and Families, Office of Child Care

17 STATES AND D.C. LIMIT THE USE OF SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS FOR CERTAIN GRADE LEVELS

● No ● Yes



STATE EXAMPLE: COLORADO HOUSE BILL 1194

- Enacted in 2019
- Prohibits suspensions or expulsions for state-funded preschool and elementary grades kindergarten through two, except under specific circumstances that jeopardize student safety
- Students suspended under allowed circumstances may not be suspended for more than three days
- Specific provision for state-funded preschool: “If an enrolling entity requests that a parent remove a child for disciplinary reasons from the school grounds for any length of time during a school day, the request constitutes a suspension.”

STATE EXAMPLE: OHIO SENATE BILL 318

- Enacted in 2018
- Prohibits suspension of students in preschool through third grade, except in specific circumstances
- If a student in preschool through third grade is to be suspended or expelled under specified circumstances, the school principal must consult with a mental health provider
- Requires training in positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) for all teachers, administrators, and staff that serve students in preschool through third grade
- Requires all school districts to adopt and implement a PBIS framework

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