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# 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 once<sup>1</sup>
  - Some preschools may use informal or “soft” suspensions by requesting parent pick up<sup>2</sup>

## State Strategies:

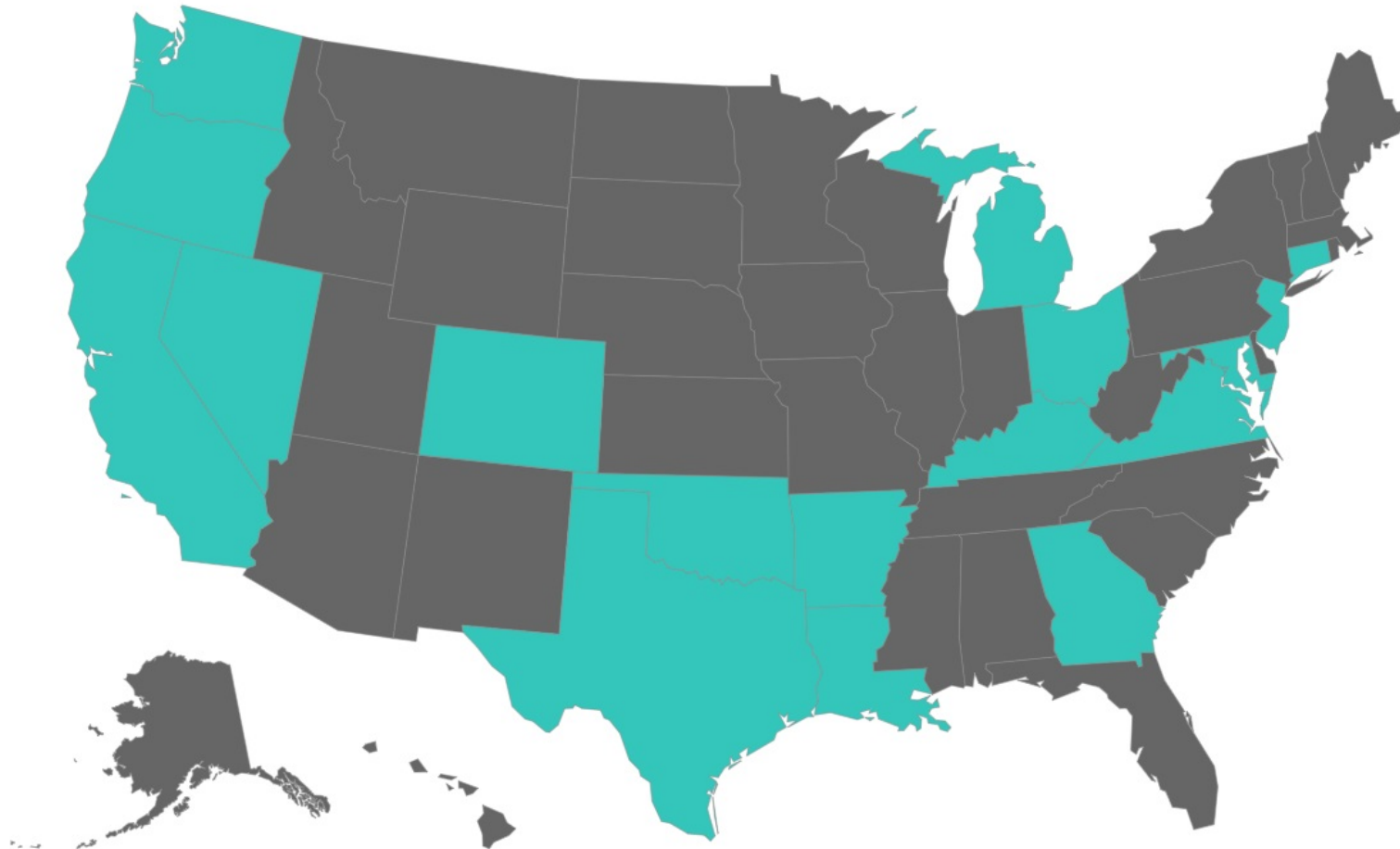
- Prohibit or severely limit exclusionary discipline for certain age groups
- Limit the length of suspensions
- Restrict the violations for which suspensions and expulsions may be given
- Require the use of positive behavior interventions and restorative practices before suspension can be considered

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

<sup>2</sup>*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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