

## SNOHOMISH COUNTY ECEAP SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT POLICY

The purpose of support and guidance in the preschool classroom is to create an environment in which children can experience success. In such an environment, children are encouraged, supported, respected and nurtured. Children also gain the skills to control their own behaviors, to resolve conflicts with others and to understand the impact choices. Behavior support is a partnership between program staff and families. **ECEAP does not allow suspension or expulsion due to challenging behaviors.**

- Classroom teachers receive support and training in social-emotional curriculum and positive behavior techniques to be used with all the children, such as through use of the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), 2<sup>nd</sup> Step (a violence prevention curriculum), and the TAT (Talking About Touching) program. Teachers receive training at a yearly Fall Institute, as well as at trainings throughout the year. Teachers have on-going support from the County Education and Family Support Coordinators (on-site, on the phone, and through email), who provide consultation, modeling, and mentoring for teachers' continued learning and professional development. Coordinators provide enhanced support to staff when a child is experiencing challenging behaviors in the ECEAP classroom.
- All children have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) developed in partnership between teachers and families. The ILP includes social-emotional goals as is appropriate. Proactive plans are put into place for children with concerns identified by the teacher on the DECA, or who are beginning to show challenging behaviors in the ECEAP classroom.
- When a child exhibits challenging behavior that puts their own physical safety at risk, or impacts the safety of the other children, the family will be immediately contacted. Family members will be asked to partner with staff in developing a plan to address the concerning behavior. In some cases, it may not be safe for the child to return to the classroom program until a plan has been put into place. In the rare case that a child is not in the classroom setting for more than a few days, the teacher and family support worker will provide enhanced in-home services to the family on a weekly basis during that time. The behavior plan will include a clear, concrete description of the unsafe behaviors and the desirable behaviors, as well as the specific steps that will be taken by the staff and family to teach, reinforce, and support positive behavior. When a behavior plan has been developed, it will be reviewed by the family and staff members on a frequent basis to assess the child's progress and any continuing needs or concerns. In addition, the family may be encouraged to seek services or evaluations from special education, mental health, or the child's physician as appropriate.

- If a child's challenging behaviors continue it may be necessary to temporarily place the child on a modified or alternate schedule. Examples of this include having a child attend class for only the first few hours of the day, or reducing the number of days the child will attend. Families will be provided with enhanced in-home services while the child is on an alternate schedule. If a child is on an alternate schedule, there must be a clear plan for ongoing assessment, including a description of what behaviors will indicate the child is ready to return to the established hours of the classroom program. Occasionally, it may be decided by the family and staff that the child's special needs would be better served in an available alternative setting. In this case, staff members will work with the family to facilitate a smooth transfer to the new program, such as a developmental preschool or a therapeutic childcare setting.



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
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September 16, 2005

**POLICY MEMO: CSU-05-02**

**TO:** ECEAP Contractors  
**FROM:** Eileen Ackerman  
ECEAP Program Manager, Children's Services Unit  
**SUBJECT:** MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

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Contractors must not expel ECEAP children for behavioral reasons and must ensure that this policy is communicated to all staff and subcontractors.

**Written Policy:** ECEAP contractors must develop a policy and procedures to support children with challenging behaviors and prohibit expulsion. The policy must include strategies appropriate to the community served and timeframes for implementation. These four topics must be addressed:

- Supporting classroom teachers.
- Planning to meet individual needs of the child.
- Engaging families and community resources.
- Options for an alternative setting, if necessary.

**CSU Technical Assistance:** Children's Services recognizes that child mental health and behavioral resources are limited in many communities. If contractors have implemented their usual strategies and the classroom is still unsafe or excessively disrupted, contractors are encouraged to contact Children's Services for technical assistance. Sample "Strategies to Address Challenging Behaviors" are attached.

Note: If you find an alternative setting that better meets a child's needs, we will not consider that move an expulsion.

For additional information regarding this policy memo, please contact me at 360/725-2862, or [EileenA@cted.wa.gov](mailto:EileenA@cted.wa.gov).

Attachment  
cc: File

## Sample Strategies to Address Challenging Behavior

1. Supporting classroom teachers
  - a. Classroom staff receive training and resources in areas such as positive behavior support, temperament theory, sensory integration strategies, and functional assessment.
  - b. Programs provide teachers with social competence curriculum materials.
  - c. Programs use a social-emotional/behavioral assessment tool such as DECA.
  - d. All classroom staff know how to get support to work with children with challenging behaviors.
  - e. Classroom staff receive ongoing consultation and mentoring regarding children with challenging behaviors.
  - f. Classroom staff can request child observations by agency staff, nurse consultants, LEA staff, and/or mental health consultants.
  - g. Programs provide additional/temporary classroom staff, as needed.
  - h. Programs provide employees with access or referral to mental health services.
2. Planning to meet individual needs of the child
  - a. Staff consult with parent/guardians to learn about family strengths, culture, communication patterns, guidance strategies, and goals.
  - b. Staff write an individual Positive Behavior Support Plan for the child, to include:
    - i. Short term and long term goals for the child, family, and classroom.
    - ii. Plan for consistency between ECEAP, childcare, and home - as much as possible.
    - iii. Adult-child interaction plans, matching the child's receptive communication style.
    - iv. Additional classroom staff, if needed.
    - v. Modifications to classroom environment, routines, and/or activities.
  - c. Staff increase the frequency and intensity of family communication and support.
3. Engaging families and community resources
  - a. Programs create a multi-disciplinary team to support the child's needs – parents, teachers, ECEAP education and family support staff, mental health consultants, LEA staff, additional child care providers, etc.
  - b. Programs refer the child/family for specialized assessment by LEA/school district, community mental health agency, pediatrician, or family physician.
  - c. If qualified for special education, staff participate in creating the Individual Education Plan. If ECEAP continues as the best placement for the child, staff use the IEP process to determine services for child, consultation for ECEAP teachers, and allocation of IDEA Part B "excess cost" dollars.
  - d. Staff refer family to counseling or services for environmental factors such as domestic violence or substance abuse.
4. Options for an alternative setting, if necessary
  - a. Programs plan to temporarily reduce the child's attendance, with in-home services, to allow for a gradual adjustment to preschool. For example, a child may attend reduced hours or days each week, with enhanced family support services provided in the home.
  - b. If necessary, programs orchestrate a planned transfer to a more appropriate setting, such as:
    - i. An ECEAP, Head Start, or other early childhood classroom with experience and expertise with similar children.
    - ii. A school district developmental preschool.
    - iii. A therapeutic program.