PRESCHOOL EXPULSIONS: PARENTAL EXPERIENCES OF BLACK BOYS WHO WERE PUSHED OUT OR LEFT BEHIND

By

Tasha K. Henneman

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ABSTRACT

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Preschool expulsions have gained new attention in the early child care field. The disproportionate rate of Blacks boys that are expelled or "pushed out" from their child care settings suggests particular concern for exploration. Behavioral problems in early childhood have negative outcomes later in life (Keane & Calkins, 2004); therefore, it is imperative that educational systems create equitable, non-disciplinary practices, which do not marginalize or shame Black boys. This study captured the experiences of five parents of Black boys that were expelled or pushed out of multiple child care settings, as well as the temporary and lasting effects of the expulsions or "push-outs" on the entire family. One center director of a state-funded preschool and one head teacher of a private center also participated. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and on-line temperament profiles. Grounded theory was used to code the data in terms of the study's conceptual framework, including relationships between parent, child and teacher/provider, Critical Race Theory (CRT), neurobiological considerations, gaps in teacher/provider preparation, and the high-stakes accountability movement. The social construction of Black boys and learning in early child care settings was also explored. Expulsions or push-outs had several negative impacts for parents, the boys of this study and their families. However, through these hardships, parents learned strong advocacy skills and showed resiliency. Implications for providers and policy are discussed.

Key terms: expulsions, push-outs, critical race theory, Black boys, child care, early learning, social construction, temperament

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my son Micah Xavier Lewis, (my future astronomer). I found out you were a boy on the same day Barak Obama announced his candidacy for president. From there, I vowed to do this work for you in efforts to illustrate how educational systems are not necessarily aligned with your success—although I know you and all other Black and Brown boys can and will prevail. I love you son and thank you for loving and appreciating “our friend the moon,” even more then me sometimes! I will ALWAYS think of you when I gaze at the nighttime sky. And to Tom Little this work is also dedicated to you. Thank you for your awareness and commitment to issues of social justice, your love of so many children and families and your tireless dedication to progressive education.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> The trouble with black boys is that too often they are assumed to be at risk because they are too aggressive, too loud, too violent, too dumb, too hard to control, too streetwise, and too focused on sports. Such assumptions and projections have the effect of fostering the very behaviors and attitudes we find problematic and objectionable. The trouble with Black boys is that too often they are placed in schools where their needs for nurturing, support and loving discipline are not met. Instead, they are labeled, shunned, and treated in ways that create and reinforce an inevitable cycle of failure (Noguera, 2003, p. xxi)

Statement of the Problem

Preschool expulsions are a relatively new phenomenon plaguing the early care and education field. Defined by Gilliam and Kaiser (2006) as "the most severe disciplinary action that an educational institution can take in response to student behavior" (p. 1), this permanent removal of a child from an educational institution is happening 3.2 times more frequently for preschoolers than for their K-12 counterparts (Gilliam, 2005). More recently, the U.S. Department of Education (2014) released Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) data compiled in 2011-2012, for the first time since 2000. Data came from 97,000 public schools and 16,500 districts representing 49 million students nationwide. African-American students represented 18% of preschool enrollment but 42% of preschool students suspended once and 48% of preschool students suspended more than once. Children may also be "pushed out" of programs, with parents leaving a program because they felt forced to and/or that if they did not leave, the child was on the verge of being expelled.

Few studies of preschool expulsions have been conducted. However, the early care and education field widely refers to Gilliam's (2005) nationwide quantitative study which revealed that African-American preschoolers were twice as likely to be expelled as

European American (both Latino and non-Latino) preschoolers and 5 times as likely to be expelled as Asian American preschoolers. Boys were also more than 4.5 times more likely to be expelled than girls. Boys' increased likelihood of expulsion was similar across all ethnicities except in the case of African-Americans. Among African-American preschoolers, boys accounted for 91.4% of the expulsions (Gilliam, 2005).

Exploration of this issue is important for several reasons. Disciplinary practices in child-care settings that result in expulsions perpetuate an inequity that has the potential to shatter the self-esteem and development of young Black boys and hinder their chances for positive social, emotional and academic experiences in later schooling. Early care systems need to be encouraged to develop more-positive practices to help reconstruct the way Black boys are viewed and treated. Additionally, the disproportionate rates of expulsion for Black boys raise the question of whether our early learning, child care, and educational settings incorporate systems of racist ideologies and practices that assume all children learn in the same way, and that Black boys are somehow more threatening and therefore need to be disciplined more frequently and more harshly.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to understand the experiences of parents of Black boys who were expelled or pushed out from multiple child-care settings. It examines parents' interpretations of the expulsion process (including whether it is viewed as discipline or punishment); the discouraging and shocking effects of expulsions on the entire family; and the learning and social construction of Black boys in early child-care settings. Information unearthed in this study may be used to inform behavior-modification policies within child-care programs; to inform policy at local, state, and federal levels; to

encourage parents to become advocates and mentors for their children, and to raise awareness of the phenomenon of expulsions, which has abysmal effects.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of parents who have preschool-aged children who were expelled from a child care setting?
2. What are the temporary and lasting effects of the expulsion on the entire family?

Background of the Study

Five parents were interviewed for this study, all of whom have children who were expelled or "pushed out" of a child care setting. Additionally, a state-funded preschool director and a privately funded center head-teacher were interviewed.

Significance of the Study

One important benefit of this research is that the parent perspectives about preschool expulsions have been minimally addressed in the literature. This study will add substantial value to the literature as realistic inappropriate examples of behavior modification methods are exposed and the effects of the expulsions are made evident. Additionally the anecdotal stories of parents who have children who were expelled is not widely addressed in the literature. Giving power to the voices and stories of the participants lends itself to documenting important inquiry. Subjects were made aware that their participation in this study benefits the ECE field by bringing awareness to a phenomenon that may support the field in several ways: improving professional systems that do not support young children to the fullest potential; informing policy; and potentially shedding light on racist or inequitable practices and ideologies that still exist

within early-care settings. For most participants, it was the first time they had an opportunity to discuss their experiences. The focus groups became an environment for support and release of information which in the past had been silenced by shame.

Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and gives an overview of the study. Chapter 2 is the literature review, which provides an historical overview of preschool, critical race theory, and relevant research that offers different considerations of the research topic. Chapter 3 focuses on the conceptual framework for the research and reviews factors that appear to influence the expulsion of preschool-aged Black boys, including the high-stakes accountability movement, gaps in teacher professional development, neurobiological considerations, and the relationships of children, parents and child-care providers or teachers. Chapter 4 describes how the research was conducted. Chapter 5 presents findings and analysis of findings in relation to the research questions. Chapter 6 relates findings to the conceptual framework, based on having used grounded theory and constant comparison to code data in terms of the conceptual framework. Chapter 7 offers conclusions and recommendations for further research and policy reform.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The goal of this chapter is to identify and understand some of the factors that create disparities in preschool expulsions between Black boys and their non-black peers. The areas of research I reviewed include Critical Race Theory (CRT); a historical overview of how Black children have experienced early schooling; the effects of early care and its quality on development; the effects of teacher-child relationships; impediments to effective care, including disproportionate preschool expulsions and associated risk factors. Lastly, the chapter will discuss remediation practices, mental health consultation and support, and the importance of continuity of care.

Critical Race Theory

Data for this study were examined through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is a movement that dates back to the 1960s; it developed from theories opposing unjust White supremacist ideologies and many racist laws that defined society at that time. CRT encompasses a wide range of theories that advance social justice and counter actions that support discrimination on the basis of race, gender, class, ethnicity or sexuality. When we consider everyday interactions with people and critically examine the racial relationships and other components involved, we can identify the true extent of the racism that guided and shaped American laws, policies, systems, beliefs, attitudes, and values. CRT examines areas in which we grew and changed as a society. However, fundamental societal ideologies did not change at the same pace, and factors that rule equitable decision-making and systematic change have not been implemented or recognized. In relation to pre-school expulsions of Black boys, CRT raises many

questions: Are we branding Black boys as failures early in life, thus stifling their growth and potential? Are systems that allow for inequitable expulsion rates shaping the identities of Black boys through means of punitive practices?

In order to place the issue of expulsions in historical context, it is important to examine significant American events of the 19th and 20th centuries: slavery and the beginning of the preschool movement. A paradigm shift also occurred in societal views of whether child care outside of the home was better for children than maternal care in the home, as "European philosophers, pedagogues, and social reformers provided models, guides and rationales for educating young children outside the home" (Beatty, 1995, p. 201).

According to CRT theorists (see Earick, 2009), the ideologies, policies and practices that promoted inequality and shaped American children during the 19th century derived from the construct that Whites were superior to all other racial groups. "The values, ethics, and beliefs of dominant racial groups translate into whether society is rooted in equity and democracy" (Earick, 2009, p. 14). Additionally, during the first years of the preschool movement, what was "best" for Black children was often based on the presumption that Blacks were not as capable as their White counterparts. This often led to inequitable circumstances for preschool-aged Black children, as demonstrated by the general 19th-century consensus that preschool-aged children from poor families could and should be educated outside of the home, while the same treatment would be harmful to children in higher socio-economic circumstances (Beatty, 1995). In each of the shifts above, the fundamentally racist ideologies and pedagogies that separated Whites from Blacks and dominated the era of slavery were prevalent and can still be found in some of

our current early childhood care systems. These historical changes are discussed below.

Historical Overview of Early Child-Care for African Americans

Slavery and its aftermath broke up hundreds of thousands of African-American families. Enslaved Black fathers were pulled from their families to work, Black mothers were turned into “mammies,” expected to leave their own children to care for White children—even breastfeeding the children of plantation owners at the expense of their own children (Michel, 1999). Slavery and its lingering effects and prejudices informed (and may continue to inform) the child-care experiences of many preschool-aged Black children. In some 19th-century early-care settings, Black children were taught how to clean, while White children were given academic instruction (Michel, 1999).

Plantations also provided different experiences for Black children and White children. Black women were impregnated (often by rape), and the children they bore became the property of the slave owner and could be put to work—boys to the fields, girls to assist with child care (Michel, 1999). Thus, Black children on plantations were exploited. Black boys often suffered most as they were frequently removed from nurturing daily parent-child relationships. Plantation owners intentionally set up child care systems for their own personal gain—to rear and train children solely to work for the profit of their plantations. In the words of a former enslaved African-American, “the white folks was crazy ‘bout their nigger babies’ cause that’s where they got their profit” (Michel, 1999, p. 37). This system of child care relates to CRT-theorist Derrick Bell’s (1980) interest-convergence concept, which indicates that White elites will tolerate racial advances or justices for Blacks only when those advances promote the self-interest of White elites. While many enslaved Black children were provided with opportunities to

work and to be raised, this solely benefited plantation owners' interests and economic profit. Blacks lost family members and were prevented from accumulating wealth.

Prior to 1860, education was haphazard; provisions for education were not strongly enforced for all children, however when they were enforced, it was more for White children than for other children (Cunningham & Osborn, 1979). Offering educational opportunities for slaves was not a priority. Still, three different types of educational institutions emerged for Blacks between 1619 and 1860; formal schools, Sabbath schools and Clandestine schools (Cunningham & Osborn, 1979). Formal schools were public institutes developed for "Negroes and Indians," who were not slaves. Prior to 1860 there were about 24 such schools; yet sadly, there is very little information about the curriculum or the personnel (Cunningham & Osborn, 1979). Eventually they faded away as they were unable sufficiently to serve Blacks; the importation of slaves also had a negative impact on education for Blacks.

Sabbath schools were formed at the turn of the 19th century and were fundamental for slaves and initially accepted by most slave owners due mainly to the religious content and instruction (Cunningham & Osborn, 1979). However the schools were quickly shut down once small groups of slaves began to rebel against their owners, fomenting the view of education as a "breeding ground for revolution" (Cunningham & Osborn, 1979, p. 21) in the eyes of slave owners. As laws restricted formal and Sabbath schools, clandestine schools sprang up. They were also known as "midnight" schools because they often offered instruction late at night, in secret, and with intense security (Cunningham & Osborn, 1979); yet, as a result of such arduous hiding, they were short-lived.

Plantation child-care and educational systems formed hierarchal structures of power and privilege that paralleled those of society, with White males at the top and Black people at the bottom. Collins (2000) referred to the matrix of domination, whereby wealthy, heterosexual White males at the top of a hierarchy have most of the privilege and power, while poor, homosexual people from Third-World countries follow; at the very bottom, Black females have the least amount of power and privilege.

In today's preschool settings, CRT informs us that these hierarchal structures still exist. "Within white discourses of (early educators) cultural and racial identities are hierarchically organized and different identities are accorded different values and places in the hierarchy" (MacNaughton & Davis, 2009, p. 118). For example, in many instances preschool head teachers and directors tend to be White women, while assistant preschool teachers are often women of color. The hierarchy is also demonstrated through the disproportionate rates of preschool expulsions among Black boys as compared to their White, Latino and Asian peers. Although society has made many strides in shifting from the blatantly racist ideologies and injustices that shaped how Black children were viewed and cared for in the 19th century, we see that those racist biases and injustices live on in more covert and unconscious ways today. Additionally, as a result of slavery generational effects of varying levels of both clinically induced and socially learned residual stress related issues were passed along as demonstrated through the theory of post-traumatic slave syndrome (PTSS) (DeGury, 2005). PTSS suggests that, "systemic racism and oppression have resulted in multigenerational adaptive behaviors—some of which have been positive and reflective of resilience, and others that are detrimental and destructive" (DeGury, 2005 p 7).

Effects of Early Care on Children's Development

Importance of Preschool

Early childhood learning experiences differ profoundly due to race and class. As of 2001, over 5 million children attended preschools or some other form of structured child development program (Pate, McIver, Dowda, Brown, & Addy, 2008) and this number continues to grow each year. In fact, it is estimated that more than half of all 3- to 5-year-old children in the U.S. attend child-care centers prior to kindergarten. This group represents three quarters of preschool children in care outside of the home (West, Wright, & Hauken, 1995). When one or both parents or guardians are working outside the home, their young children need some sort of child care. Preschool has become a necessity for many families. At the same time it offers a new environment for young children to develop their cognitive, social, and emotional skills. This study rests on the assumption that quality preschool can provide positive experiences for young children, building a foundation for future success in school, life, and society. This "preschool effect" is due largely to the opportunities for play, discovery, learning and the overall development of positive relationships between the children and teachers. However, quality education—particularly, quality teacher-child relationships—are essential in producing successful outcomes for children.

One of the most important resources in the literature that helped inform the relationship between child-care experiences and children's development were the early 1964-1980 Intervention Child Care Projects, research-based child-care centers designed for low-income children. These centers held that programs that provided frequent, responsive, and stimulating interactions with caregivers were needed to achieve positive

outcomes for the children in care. Exposing children to a variety of educational materials and experiences was expected to enhance their cognitive development over time (Burchinal et al., 1997). Outcomes of this research confirmed this to be the case.

Controversial views of the effects of early care on children's development date back to the 17th century. Natural philosophers such as Johann Amos Comenius and John Locke believed that maternal care provided in the home was best for young children and led to their healthy development (Beatty, 1995). Non-maternal care outside of the home was viewed as a developmental risk. Belsky (1986) shared this same view in his research stating, "Entry into full-time (non-maternal) care in the first year of life is a 'risk factor' for the development of insecure-avoidant attachments in infancy and heightened aggressiveness, noncompliance, and withdrawal in preschool and early years" (p. 7). However, Clarke-Stewart (1989) questioned the association between the amount of time spent in care during the first few years of life and the effects on well-balanced mother-child relationships and children's later behavior problems. Instead, researchers showed that the major influences on children's development had less to do with non-maternal/ parental care and more to do with the continuity and quality of care at home and in other care environments (Burchinal, 1999), which can help to bridge the many barriers that exist for families with two parents working outside of the home, poor families, and immigrant families.

Quality Counts

Quality early-care experiences are especially likely to have a positive impact on families and on children's development. Quality is defined in terms of the characteristics of preschool programs, practices, or teaching methods that positively support the overall

development of a child (Fuller, Gasko, & Anguiano, 2007). Whether measured as a proximal process (i.e., teacher-child interaction) or a structural process (i.e., ratios, group-size, teacher-training), research suggests that the higher the quality, particularly as it relates to teacher development (Fuller et al., 2007), the better are children's linguistic, cognitive and social functioning and outcomes (Burchinal,Vandergrift, Planta, & Mashburn, 2010; Vernon-Feagans, Emmanuel & Blood, 1997). Quality also has become an important policy issue in this country (Peisner-Feinberg, et al., 2001) and is regulated by states. Yet, according to Fuller et al., regulating quality on the state level may produce limited effects on teacher-child outcomes since state-regulated quality focuses largely on structural changes, whereas regulation of quality at the local level focuses more on teacher development and hence promotes more positive teacher-child relationships and outcomes. Regulation of quality in teacher development is key to addressing the issue of expulsions, as efforts to professionalize the 0-5 field can affect which teachers remain in the workforce and affect overall teacher-child relationships.

Among studies that show the effects of quality in early care on low-income children's development and teacher-child relationships, three are *The National Child Care Staffing Study* (Whitebook, Howes, Phillips, 1998); *The Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study* (Cost, Quality & Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995); and the National Institute on Child and Human Development (NICHD) *Study of Early Child Care* (1991). Conducted in 1997-1998, the *National Child Care Staffing Study* (Whitebook, Howes, Phillips, 1998), observed 227 low-income child care centers in five metropolitan areas. Results showed that infants, toddlers and preschoolers in higher-quality classes with lower staff turnover were more likely to exhibit pro-social behaviors than were children

in lower-quality centers (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990) and were more securely attached to their caregivers (Howes, Phillips, & Whitebook, 1992). The *Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study* (1995) found that teachers reported fewer behavioral problems when the teacher reported a closer relationship with the child (Peisner-Feinberg & Burchinal, 1997). Quality of care was also related to better peer interactions among children (Howes, Smith & Galinsky, 1995; Vollig & Feagans, 1994), especially when caregivers encouraged group interaction (Rosenthal, 1994), were more socially competent in interacting with children (Howes et al., 1992), or demonstrated closer relationships with children (Burchinal, 1999). The NICHD *Study of Early Child Care* (1991) found that the higher the quality of child care, the higher children tended to score on cognitive and language tests.

Other studies indicate that quality of care is relevant to behavioral problems (Burchinal, 1999). Brooks-Gunn, Klebanov, Liaw, and Spiker, (1993) found that mothers reported declines in their toddlers' and preschoolers' externalizing behaviors in higher-quality child-care centers.

Lastly, three additional longitudinal studies have shown the effects of early high-quality child-care on low-income Black children: the *High Scope Perry Preschool Study of 1962-2005* (Schweinhart, Barnes, & Weikart, (1993); *Chicago Longitudinal Study* of *1980 (*Reynolds, 1986-1989) ; and *Carolina Abecedarian Study of 1972* (Ramey, C. T., & Campbell, F. A. (1984). All three studies concluded that early quality child-care did indeed produce higher intellectual, pro-social, and cognitive developmental gains (Campbell & Ramey, 1995) for the children. In addition, participants had lower juvenile arrest rates, higher graduation rates, and fewer suspensions and expulsions. Cost-benefit

analysis of fiscal investment in such quality programs showed that for every $1 invested in quality early childhood care, $7.14 was returned to society.

Thus, quality early-care environments matter and nurturing relationships are essential (Shonkoff, & Phillips, 2000) to reinforce the healthy development of young children, especially children from low-income families. In early care settings, the development of positive teacher-child relationships is also crucial.

Effects of Teacher-Child Relationships on Children's Development

Like parents, teachers share in the role of primary caregiver for children who spend many hours in their care. Teacher-child relationships can have both positive and negative effects on a child's behavior. High-quality teacher-child relationships and classrooms produce higher levels of social and linguistic competence, improved academic outcomes and lower levels of behavioral problems (Burchinal et al., 2010). Therefore, fostering nurturing, positive relationships with children is key to obtaining positive outcomes. However, when children are expelled from early childhood care settings, they experience the loss of one or more positive relationships established with their teachers. This may contribute to development of trauma, which creates toxic stress that can eventually lead to adult medical problems (Tough, 2011). (See the conceptual framework's neurobiological considerations).

A student's academic and social school experience is also influenced by his or her ability to meet the teacher's expectations (Lane, Staton-Chapman, & Phillips, 2007). When teachers' expectations of behavior are not met, they may not develop positive, nurturing relationships with children. "Children who have highly negative relationships

with their teachers are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of behavior problems and lower levels of behavioral competencies" (Lane et al., 2007, p. 87).

High teacher-turnover rates can also have negative effects on teacher-child relationships. At 30% per year, the early-care field is known to have the highest turnover rates of any profession tracked by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (1998). High turnover rates disrupt the continuity of care that helps children establish healthy and secure attachments to their teachers. Attachment theory informs us that young children need to make these emotional connections with their caregivers in order to feel safe and secure while navigating and learning about the world. Such "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (Bowlby, 1969, p. 194) helps children at a very young age but lasts throughout their lifetimes. When children have secure attachments, they are much more likely to exhibit pro-social behaviors, have higher self-esteem, and develop and maintain trusting relationships. Fostering positive, sensitive teacher-child relationships produces higher achievement gains for children, which should ultimately be the goal of all preschool settings.

Preschool Expulsion Risk Factors

In California, the rate of preschool expulsions (7.5 per 1,000 children) exceeds the national average of 6.7 per 1,000 (Gilliam, 2005). A follow up study (Gilliam & Shahar, 2006) highlighted rates and predictors of preschool and child-care expulsion and suspension. Risk factors for expulsions included: low income of parents, challenging behaviors, teacher mental health, parental mental health and structural characteristics, such as the setting and number of hours spent in care. This study suggested that children

from low-income families, such as those targeted by most public-supported preschool efforts, may be at increased risk of expulsion and suspension during the preschool years.

Low Income

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2007), 17% of American children live in families with annual incomes below the federal poverty level ($20,614 for a family of four). Low-income families have a set of barriers and stressors that contribute to poorer developmental outcomes for young children, including higher risk for physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional problems (McLoyd, 1989). Income-related cognitive disparities can emerge at as early as 9 months of age and widen by 24 months (Halle et al., 2009). Three- and four-year-olds in families of low socio-economic status have been shown to have half the vocabulary of their more-affluent peers (Duncan, Ludwig, & Magnuson, 2007).

Qi and Kaiser (2003) compiled a systematic review of 30 studies of behavioral problems in preschoolers conducted between 1991 and 2002; they found that low family income was associated with a significant increase in risk for behavioral problems. Due to exposure to a wide range of psychosocial stressors, children in poor neighborhoods are at especially high risk for developing emotional and behavioral difficulties (Qi & Kaiser, 2003) but have minimal access to mental health services (Fantuzzo et al., 1999).

Challenging Behavior

Challenging behavior is another risk factor for preschool expulsions. The spectrum of challenging behavior ranges across the developmentally “normal” behaviors of biting, hitting, and kicking to more severe behaviors that may warrant a psychiatric diagnosis. One study suggested that 8% of all preschoolers (aged 3 to 5 years) exhibit

behavioral problems severe enough to warrant a psychiatric diagnosis (Keenan & Wakschlag, 2004). Yet I question how a preschool program determines and/or gauges which behaviors warrant additional mental-health support services versus an expulsion.

Developmental theory suggests the level of behaviors that are appropriate for children to display at the preschool age. For instance, a child who does not know how to join in a community of other children at play may hit or push to find a way in; however difficult, these behaviors may align with what developmental theory deems appropriate. At the preschool stage, language and emotional regulation are still developing, and preschoolers often present as angry, stubborn, difficult to discipline, or easily frustrated when trying to do simple tasks, particularly if these are tasks that most others their age can do. The egocentric nature of a preschool child may emerge when the child is not receiving enough praise, and as a result, children may purposefully try to displease caregivers or parents.

Also, at age four, approximately one in 10 preschoolers still cannot control strong impulses (Neville, 2007). Children know that they should not do certain things, such as throw toys, scream, or hit, but they may not have strong-enough impulse control to do the "right" thing (Neville, 2007), which can reduce their self-esteem. Therefore for all children to have a fair chance, sensitive approaches to shaping behavior need to be considered; these should involve healthy, developmentally appropriate discipline practices. Preschool expulsions shatter that chance. Since behavioral problems in preschool are associated with later behavioral problems, poorer peer social standing, and decreased educational achievement and test scores in kindergarten (Keane & Calkins,

2004) it is imperative that early-care systems support positive behavior modification in the early years and deconstruct the subjective nature of how children learn.

Teacher Mental Health

The mental health of preschool teachers is another risk factor (Gilliam & Shahar, 2006). Young children's social emotional health is intimately linked to the mental health of their caregivers (Crockenberg & Leerkes, 2000; Zeanah, Boris, & Sheeringa, 1997). Many preschool teachers are susceptible to depression because of the lack of adult interaction, poor wages, disproportionate child-adult ratios, and stress of dealing with challenging child behavior, among other things (Gilliam & Shahar, 2006, Hemmeter, Santos & Ostrosky, 2008; D. Perry, 2007). "Depression among preschool teachers may have detrimental effects on adult-child relationships and children's development…care giving is less sensitive, more withdrawn from children, and more intrusive and negative" (Gilliam & Shahar, 2006, p. 230).

Although there are multiple positive support models designed to address challenging behaviors, many preschool programs use their own philosophies or methods. For many publicly funded preschools, there are standards and mandates in place for how teachers should interact with children. However, in some cases, teachers themselves are unaware of how to respond effectively to challenging behaviors. As one study suggested, many teachers in both two- and four-year early childhood education programs (that involved understanding the social-emotional development and challenging behaviors of children) felt they did not master the skills needed to address young children's challenging behaviors (Hemmeter et al., 2008). Practicing teachers also reported they did

not feel competent to address challenging behaviors and said this was a top training need (Hemmeter et al.; Joseph, Strain, & Skinner, 2004).

Efforts to professionalize the 0-5 field continue to focus greatly on early childhood teachers' acquiring educational units and degrees (much like the K-12 workforce), whereas practical approaches for responding to challenging behaviors are seemingly given less attention. Hence, an expulsion is a quick fix: one that eliminates or minimizes the challenges of utilizing positive behavior modification. Our early-care training systems do not allocate teachers enough time or opportunity for mental-health support, such as incorporating reflective-supervision and self-reflective practices.

Self-reflective practices or reflective supervision offer opportunities for staff members to discuss their experiences, thoughts, and feelings related to their work. Such practices provide support and knowledge to guide decision-making, offer empathy, and help staff to manage stress and the intensity of work with families (Parlakian, 2002). Implementing these practices requires each person to consider and identify his or her intentional and unintentional biases. By acknowledging the fact that one can be guilty of projecting one's own assumptions about others, which often result in racist, classist or homophobic tendencies, self-reflection helps to identify patterns of recurrence. Additionally, self-reflection offers individuals an opportunity to examine their own cultural backgrounds and identities. The better one gets at reflective self-awareness, the more likely the decrease in stereotyping that leads to preschools' not providing equitable services. Unfortunately, in many preschool programs this practice has not taken root (for a variety of reasons) and as a result, black boys who exhibit age-appropriate challenging behaviors are subjected to swift punishments that result in their untimely, permanent

removal from a preschool setting.

Mental-Health Consultations

Through a variety of teaching approaches, early-care educators experience a multitude of behaviors from the children in their care. It is key that preschool teachers respond to children individually, acknowledging that what works for one child may not work for another. However, in many cases, teachers cannot offer individualized responses to the needs of children with behavioral problems due to lack of time, resources, or teacher experience. Preschool programs may also take a “cookie-cutter” or “one-way” approach with their teaching methods. Yet, one in every five preschool-aged children has some type of behavioral or emotional problem (Earls, 1980; Luk et al., 1991) and multiple reports from early childhood teachers indicate that more children with greater emotional and developmental difficulties are entering their preschool programs each year (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006; Yoshikawa & Knitzer, 1997). Consequently, many early childhood teachers do not feel equipped to respond to the particular needs of the children who exhibit challenging behaviors (Hemmeter et al., 2008; Kaufman & Wischmann, 1999; Yoshikawa & Knitzer, 1997). Indeed, what is designated an emotional or behavioral problem may be the result of the class context or teaching methods, rather than a problem situated in the child.

Over the last 10 years there has been a movement to involve Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) consultants with teachers and families in early childhood settings as a key support for working with children who exhibit challenging behaviors. This section describes what ECMH professionals do, how teachers access their support when

confronted with a child's challenging behavior, and how this work has supported children and families in succeeding in preschool.

The role of an ECMH consultant is to provide support to preschool teachers, providers, staff and parents by helping to assess the social, emotional and behavioral challenges that young children experience in child-care settings. However, the focus is not just on the challenging behavior of the child, but also on ways to improve environmental factors, adult-child relationships or parent/home contributing factors, which can each affect behavior. Defined by Cohen and Kaufman (2000),

> Mental health consultation in early childhood settings is a problem-solving and capacity-building intervention implemented within a collaborative relationship between a professional consultant with mental health expertise and one or more caregivers, typically an early care and education provider and/or family member. Early childhood mental health consultation aims to build the capacity (improve the ability) of staff, families, programs, and systems to prevent, identify, treat and reduce the impact of mental health problems among children from birth to age six and their families. (p. 1)

There are two different types of mental health consultations. Case- or child-centered consultations involve activities that center on an individual child's difficulties through engagement in direct clinical services that often involve family members (Alkon, Ramler, & MacLennan, 2003; Johnston & Brinamen, 2006). Programmatic consultations offer a broader scope of assessment that considers quality improvements to different aspects of the child-care program (Alkon et al., 2003; Johnston & Brinamen, 2006).

One of the main themes to emerge from the literature on mental-health consultants is the importance of their ability to build and maintain trusting relationships with children, parents, and preschool staff, as they interface with both sets of adults (Alkon et al., 2003; Cohen & Kaufman, 2000, Duran et al., 2009; Johnston & Brinamen, 2006). According to Johnston and Brinamen (2006), a consultation is "a relationship

process that begins at the initial request…it is a collaborative effort" (p. 67), and "the ultimate aim is to improve the quality of relationships within a child-care community, especially the child-provider relationship." (p. 102). Research supports the notion that the emotional wellbeing of young children, their healthy early development, and their success in later years is linked to positive, nurturing relationships with the adult caregivers in their lives (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006; Knitzer, 2000). The impact of the quality of a caregiver's relationship with a child also contributes to the quality of a young child's mental health (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006).

What consultants do. Many experts agree that challenging behavior is connected to children's communication skills (Brault & Brault, 2005). One framework for understanding behavior suggests five causes of such behavior: (1) developmental factors, (2) individual differences, (3) the child-care environment, (4) the home environment, and (5) culture (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006).

In considering this framework, it is the consultant's job to translate meaning (understanding of child's behavior) into responsive action. Doing this requires a skill set that includes being self-aware, and having a knowledge of mental-health principles, expertise in working with parents, familiarity with child development, group-facilitation skills, appreciation of group care, and curiosity and respect for differences (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006). In addition, according to Johnston and Brinamen, (2006), consultants embrace a "way of being" (p. 569): a "consultant stance" p. 569) which encompasses mutuality of endeavor, avoids the position of the "expert," prioritizes working instead of knowing, understands the subjective expertise of others, considers all levels of influence; hears and represents all voices—especially that of the child; centralizes relationships;

uses parallel processes as an organizing principle; is patient; and holds hope. ECMH consultants also work toward improving the self-efficacy of providers (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006)—specifically, guiding providers into believing they can be responsive to the needs of the children in their care even when they do not feel competent.

How teachers access support. There are several ways that ECMH consultants can be accessed for support. Usually, the request for services begins with an early childhood teacher or director's recognition that a child's behavior is challenging beyond the means of the teacher or program understanding. To obtain the support of a mental-health consultant, programs can contact any of the following types of organizations for referrals: family-resource centers; resource and referral agencies; public-health departments; mental-health agencies; referrals from friends; human-services agencies; departments of children, youth, and family services; or doctors' offices. However, obtaining services can be challenging for many programs due to cost.

Paths of access differ for publicly and privately funded preschool programs. Publicly funded programs like Head Start are mandated to have the support of ECHC as stated in Head Start's Article 1304.24(a)(3)(i-iv):

> Mental health program services must include a regular schedule of on-site mental health consultation involving the mental health professional, program staff, and parents on how to: i. Design and implement program practices responsive to the identified behavioral and mental health concerns of an individual child or group of children; ii. Promote children's mental wellness by providing group and individual staff and parent education on mental health issues; iii. Assist in providing special help for children with atypical help for children with atypical behavior or development; and iv. Utilize other community mental health resources as needed. (p. 129)

This mandate is a wonderful example of how mental-health services should be required and made accessible to all families and all child-care programs. Although costs

create a barrier to these mental-health services, Head Start illustrates how policy can integrate important services for children, families and the caregivers in their lives. Privately funded programs can use their own discretion when accessing the services of ECMH consultants, and funding often spearheads this process.

The work of ECMH consultants has supported children, families and early childhood teachers, staff, and administrators in myriad ways. Much of the research on mental-health consultations in early childhood shows positive outcomes for all involved. In one study (Tryminski, 2001), children initially exhibited delays in their social and emotional development for a period of 20 months. However, after intervention with the support of ECMH consultants, these delays were reduced from 20 months to 9 months in a period of just 8 months. Other positive child outcomes as a result of ECMH consultations include decreased expulsion rates (Duran et al., 2009; Gilliam & Shahar, 2006), increased numbers of children in placements that meet their needs, decreased problematic behavior (internalizing and externalizing), increased pro-social behavior, improved school readiness (Duran et al., 2009) and improved adult-child relationships (Alkon et al., 2003). Families and Early Childhood Education (ECE) providers have experienced similar outcomes as a result of ECMH consultations including decreased stigma associated with mental-health services, implementing recommended techniques or strategies, having a greater understanding of certain behaviors of children, experiencing improved interactions with children, improved parent/provider communication, and improved collaboration with consultants (Duran et al., 2009). Preschool teachers and staff also reported reduced stress, greater confidence and self-efficacy in working with children, and lower staff turnover (Duran et al., 2009; Low, 2010).

The work ECMH consultants engage in is a collaborative process (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006) that requires input, support and cooperation from parents/families, child-care staff and the ECMH consultants themselves: "It takes a village to raise a child." Strengthening the relationships between all of these groups is essential. In addition, the adults involved need to be open-minded in co-creating the meaning of behavior (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006), sharing assumptions that all behavior has meaning (Brault & Brault, 2005; Johnston & Brinamen, 2006). Based on questions about children's challenging behavior, adults can form hypotheses about what is happening with the child. In this type of inquiry, meaning is not found in the behavior but rather is understood in terms of the relationships in which the child is engaged. "The task is to decipher and understand the behavior as an idiosyncratic expression of the child (Johnston & Brinamen, 2006, p. 247)," and not as a disruptive fault.

Chapter 2 has discussed some issues related to quality in the early child care setting. Chapter 3 will go on to discuss the conceptual framework for this study, including the way in which Critical Race Theory can be used to understand early child care.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Our current system of early childhood educational (ECE) services falls short in various ways; it is characterized by lack of integration of services and systems that support the whole child, as demonstrated by the phenomenon of preschool expulsions. We can perhaps address this problem by examining factors that may perpetuate it—specifically, those identified in this study's conceptual framework (see Figure 1): the high-stakes accountability movement; neuro-biological considerations; and gaps in systems of professional development for preschool teachers. Examining these factors using the lens of Critical Race Theory helps illuminate the prevalence of expulsions among black preschool boys, while altering the deficit lens through which expulsions are often viewed. I will also consider the remediation perspective that has dominated the field with regard to teaching children of color.

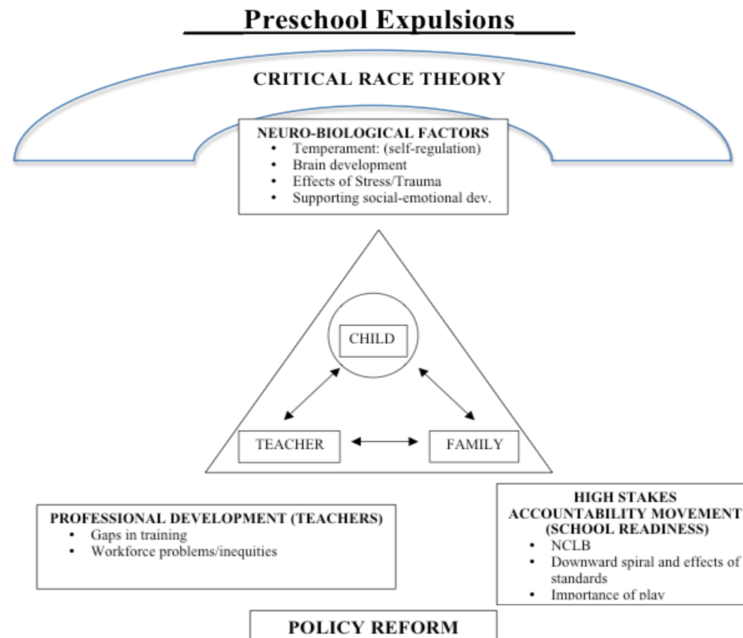

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

High-Stakes Accountability Movement (School Readiness)

> A Critical Race Theory lens is used in ECE because the racial reality of ECE students is one of indoctrination that spreads into notions of a meritocracy through a radicalized teacher workforce and an educational testing system that privileges whites over all other peoples. (Earick, 2009, p. 14)

The high-stakes accountability movement refers to standardized testing in the K-12 system that is used to measure student achievement, school ratings, administrator rewards or consequences, and discipline (McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, & Vasquez, 2008). For preschoolers, high stakes accountability and/or testing is translated as school readiness—and the definition of readiness as being academically prepared. Typically in K-12 settings the higher the test scores, the better the ratings or outcomes for administrators. However, studies on high-stakes accountability indicate disparities between closing the achievement gap and equitable educational experiences that support children across all racial groups; high-stakes accountability appears to harm children, particularly those in low-performing schools (Kohn, 2000, Valli & Buese, 2007). Despite mandates to address the academic and social needs of students enrolled in public K-12 education systems, many public school students across the nation are not meeting the developmental and educational standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (NCLB, 2002). This further widens gaps between affluent children and low-income or minority children in the areas of achievement, graduation rates, and levels of suspensions and expulsions (McNeil et al., 2008, Noguera, 2003). Standards also exert pressure on teachers by taking away control of curriculum, disrupting their often highly effective organic teaching styles and practices, and altering student-teacher relationships (Valli & Buese, 2007). As the standards change from year to year, it is also not consistently clear what children are expected to learn and know, or what preschool-age

children should be taught in order to be ready for kindergarten.

Following implementation of the NCLB Act, the Bush Administration created the Good Start Grow Smart, an early childhood initiative in 2002 to align early-care standards to those of the K-12 system, including a focus on strengthening Head Start. However, development of systems of accountability is fairly new to the early-education field and although well intentioned, the guidelines that affect school readiness are shifting from social competence and play to literacy and discrete academic outcomes (Snow, 2003). This shift has generated problems, particularly for boys (Snow, 2003) as opportunities to play can be limited by required assessments. Yet play is a key component in the early development of children; it offers a foundation and important opportunities for children to find meaning and gain understanding in learning. Although some in the early childhood field feel that standards are a way to improve quality (Kagan & Cohen, 1997), other early educators feel standards do more harm than good "by promoting educational practices that undermine children's enthusiasm for learning, and as a result, negatively affect(ing) their ultimate academic performance" (Stipek, 2006, p. 456).

Systems of "teaching to the test" not only disrupt organic forms of learning but can also create biases in teachers' perceptions of students. "When high-stakes accountability standards are applied to educators, those who teach low-scoring populations will be most likely to be branded as failures" (Kohn, 2000, p. 325). This is of particular concern for Black boys, who already contend with preschool teachers' racial stereotypes.

Research on the K-12 high-stakes accountability movement has shown that

measuring academic achievement through standardization and high-stakes testing creates systems of education that ultimately benefit White students to the detriment of Black students and other students of color (Lay J., & Stokes-Brown A., 2009). High-stakes testing and accountability systems also assume that all children are equally motivated to achieve in school, and achieve in only one way. However, Black boys may need other forms of motivation to learn and to achieve—ones that high-stakes testing cannot produce. If multiple modules of learning are not offered in educational systems then we are not taking the diversity of students into consideration. Dating back to the era of slavery, black students have had to overcome trials and tribulations around learning, which could have literally be a matter of life and death. The experience of my own father is one example: he was a Black man raised in the south, and at age 10 had his front teeth permanently knocked out by two white men who discovered that he was writing his own notes to the librarian in order to be able to check out books.

Many of the factors that are relevant to a child's success and ability are never considered in evaluating outcomes of high-stakes testing. If values continue to shift towards emphasizing academic results instead of learning through play and social development, early-care settings will continue to sustain pedagogies that create racially divided outcomes, invite developmentally inappropriate practices, and support the assumption that there is only one way to measure student learning.

Neurobiological Factors

> Virtually every aspect of early human development, from the brain's evolving circuitry to the child's capacity for empathy, is affected by the environments and experiences that are encountered in a cumulative fashion, beginning in the prenatal period and extending throughout the early childhood years. (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000, p. 6)

Neuroscience offers an amazing wealth of information that helps us better understand what children need, particularly in the early stages of life (0-3 years) when the brain is especially open to absorbing new information. Advances in brain development research have revealed that it is important for very young children to experience regular stimulation and interaction with parents, caregivers and the environment (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). However, these interactions can be disrupted, causing trauma or stress, which in turn can impair brain development. Preschool expulsions and the trauma they cause might thus affect the brain development of young children.

The brain is a part of the central nervous system and the structures that support social, emotional and mental development are manufactured in early childhood and deteriorate over time (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). At birth, babies have 100 billion neurons making connections with each other through synapses to increase to 1,000 trillion neurons by age three (twice the number adults have); in part, neurons are stimulated through interactions with a caregiver, such as reading, singing, and touch. Synapses (the connections between the neurons) are critical to brain development because they facilitate the way information flows from neuron to neuron and ultimately support motor, cognitive and sensory processing.

When a child receives only minimal stimulation, synapses do not develop at a high rate and the brain makes fewer connections. One major way expulsions may affect brain development and cause stress for young preschoolers is through the loss of the relationship between a teacher and child. The emotional bonding fostered in child-care settings helps guide the formation of connections between neurons; the result of developing these connections can be seen in children's behavioral developments during

different stages as they demonstrate a variety of skills (Harvey & Gunner, 2000). Once a child experiences relational loss, it can trigger a stress response, increasing the release of cortisol (a stress hormone). In the case of a young preschooler who may already be experiencing a stressful home environment, increased cortisol release can have negative effects, including impaired cognitive performance, blood-sugar imbalances, poorly controlled stress response systems, depression, and anger (Murray, 2004).

The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004) suggested that emotions support executive functions of the brain. However, when emotions are poorly regulated, they can interfere with attention and decision-making, affecting behavior. This occurs because emotion and cognition are interrelated and rely on the emergence, maturation, and interconnection of complex neural areas of the brain, including the prefrontal cortex, limbic cortex, basal forebrain, amygdala, hypothalamus, and brainstem (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004).

> The circuits that are involved in the regulation of emotion are highly interactive with those that are associated with executive functions (such as planning, judgment, and decision making), which are intimately involved in the development of problem-solving skills during preschool years. (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004. p. 2)

Early childhood stress or trauma can even lead to adult medical problems (Tough, 2011).

Society's pressure for four-year olds to perform and "behave" often removes opportunities for the best way young brains learn—through play. In past eras preschool was a place for play and release from stressful home environments, particularly for young black boys who labored at a young age and for whom home life may have been filled with grown-up responsibilities. This may also be the present-day case for young Black boys who are raised in low-income households, in that the stressors of the environment

leave little room for play and exploration and school may then be a place to experience such play. Young children with little opportunity to explore and experiment with their environments may fail fully to develop the neural connections and pathways that facilitate learning (Harvey & Gunner, 2000). Therefore, expelling a young child from a preschool setting can create harmful outcomes, as well as the inevitable inequitable learning experiences. The development of boys' brains and overall nervous systems is delayed compared to girls (Berk, 2002; Leaper et al., 1998) affecting cognitive development, attention and emotional regulation, and the overall "school readiness" of boys, including activity, attention span and academic development (Wardle, 2007).

Sameroff and Chandler (1975) proposed the Transactional Model of Development, which suggested that developmental outcomes of young children have a reciprocal relationship with child behaviors, caregiver responses to behavior, and environmental variables. The sociodemographic risk factors of this model— family conflict, family instability and community violence—interact with such preschool expulsion risk factors as lower income of parents, challenging behaviors, teacher mental health, parental mental health and structural characteristics Gilliam & Shahar, (2006). This combination of factors can influence neurobiological systems in young children, creating ongoing "toxic" stress and affecting behavior. Awareness of the impact of stress and trauma on young children suggests choosing different discipline and teaching strategies or techniques when responding to children with challenging behaviors. "Understanding the impact of experience on a developing child by using neurodevelopment conceptualization (understanding the relationship of trauma) offers certain directions for our culture" (Perry, 1996, p. 393). Teachers who manifest low

expectations of the capabilities of Black boys, or who do not consider neurobiological factors that affect behavior, may exhibit differential treatment and disciplinary strategies or children that create systemic inequitable responses to Black boys.

The Transactional Model of Development framework (Sameroff & Chandler, 1975) also reinforces the understanding that secure and healthy attachments increase the potential for young children to master stressful experiences while promoting autonomy (Masten et al., 1990), particularly from the perspective of neurobiological factors which affect behavior. Fortunately, not all traumatic events lead to disastrous mental health outcomes for young children. In fact, most children do well if they have at least one secure attachment or relationship with a caregiver (Perry, Pollard, Blakley, Baker & Vigilante, 1995). Thus, given the importance of the provider-child relationship, it is important to discuss gaps in preschool teachers' development.

Gaps in Preschool Teacher Preparation

> If we are dedicated to closing the achievement gap, we must gain insights into how the current paradigms of professional development for teachers are organized around white racial ideology, and in what ways these paradigms embody types of white racial projects found in the U.S. (Earick, 2009, p. 8)

Preschool teachers are key to ensuring that children are cared for, nurtured and supported throughout their development. These professionals endure hard days of work doing one of society's most important jobs; yet they earn low wages, lack health-care benefits, exhibit high-turnover rates, and often, have limited options for professional advancement or growth. Among several gaps in the preparation of preschool teachers, lack of training in cultural competencies and lack opportunities for either supervised or self-reflection are especially relevant for this study.

Cultural competence is the constant process, practice, or ability to interact with

people from different cultures understanding that we share different values, perspectives, experiences and knowledge. It is a way of understanding or at least attempting to understand, respect, and acknowledge differences within and between various cultural or racial groups. There is immense racial and cultural diversity within the teaching staff, children, and families in preschool programs. However, issues of race are often left out of teacher discussions, trainings and curricula, beyond the typical cultural celebrations or artifacts of clothing, food or music. The important deep-rooted issues of culture—values, beliefs, and attitudes—are not prioritized in training. “ECE childhood educators are not mandated in state certification systems to critically reflect on their group and individual ideologies, racial or otherwise, in preservice programs” (Earick, 2009, p. 8). As a result of this lack of training, we may encounter teachers whom Gaertner and Dovidio (2005) would call aversive racists; people who “sympathize with victims of past injustice, support the principle of racial equality, and regard themselves as nonprejudiced, but, at the same time, possess negative feelings and beliefs about Blacks, which may be unconscious” (p. 618).

It is inevitable that, teachers working with young children will find themselves juggling multiple types of desirable and undesirable behaviors. Teachers may have biases, perceptions, assumptions, and preconceived notions about children, particularly those with challenging behaviors. Many of these challenging behaviors may be developmentally appropriate for preschool-aged children, while others may extend beyond what is considered “normal.” Whether developmentally appropriate or not, these challenging behaviors are increasingly resulting in higher expulsion rates for preschool-aged children, especially Black boys. An examination of the remediation that has

dominated the early childhood field may help explain these outcomes.

Early Education and Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Far too often, teachers, policy makers and society at large assume that Black children and English language learners are in need of special remediation programs because somehow children from these communities are deprived and need something more than their White counterparts. Through the lens of CRT, McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) referred to “equity traps,” defined as “ways of thinking or assumptions that prevent educators from believing that their students of color can be successful learners” (pp. 601-602). These children are viewed through a deficit lens and the responsibility to “fix” these populations is determined by White educators or administrators, without input from individuals of the same racial group.

Delpit (1988) referred to the lack of input from people of the same racial groups as “silenced dialogue.” Specifically, silenced dialogue describes the frustration people of color feel with being left out of many conversations about how to educate poor children and children of color: often their own children. Delpit also contended that alienation and miscommunication occur in the debate about teaching poor children and children of color, and that simply focusing on the methodologies used is not enough. Instead, educators and institutions need to focus more on transverse cultural communication to understand the complicated issue she called “the culture of power” (p. 282).

The culture of power refers to power imbalances and cultural conflicts that occur within classrooms and affect everyday interactions between teachers and their low-income and minority students (Delpit, 1998). Teachers often view these students as “other” or as “damaged and dangerous caricatures of the vulnerable and impressionable

beings" (Delpit, 1988, p. xiii). According to Delpit (1995), five aspects of the culture of power exist in classrooms and influence responses to low-income and minority students:

> (1) Issues of power are enacted in classrooms. (2) There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a "culture of power." (3) The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the culture of those who have power. (4) If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being explicitly told the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier. (5) Those with power are frequently least aware of or least willing to acknowledge its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence, (Delpit, 1995, p. 24).

There are many rules and codes to understand and follow in order to participate in the culture of power, including a consciousness of "self" and being aware of how one acts, dresses, talks, thinks, or socializes in a particular setting (Delpit, 1998). Teachers should be responsible for teaching students these codes so that they may participate, exist in, and understand the culture of power. Otherwise, barriers between teachers and students dominate conversation, interaction, and communication styles, and cultural epigrams and overall ways of being can be misinterpreted.

In addition, classrooms use predetermined books, curricula and resources that lay the groundwork for what is being taught. The people who produce these materials and resources thus have the power to determine what children learn; yet, these materials often exclude the experiences of people of color. Since what is taught in the classroom ultimately has an effect on later success and career outcomes "then schooling is intimately related to that power" (Delpit, 1988, p. 25). Any institution can achieve success when all others associated with the institution attain the culture of the people of power within the institution. "If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier" (Delpit, 1988, p. 25). Teachers always have more power—but children who understand the

cultural mores and align with mainstream cultural experiences also acquire more power and success. If students are specifically informed about these social conventions and demonstrate competency, then a teacher may be more likely to grant more responsibility, and hence more power to students. Although this is in reference to older students it seems as though it could apply for preschoolers.

The assumptions and mores of the culture of power assume that children who do not know specific things are in need of remediation. However, the remediation does not consist of teaching those children the rules and mores of the culture of power. Instead, teachers perceive children through their own culturally distinct lenses and often make negative assumptions about a child's ability from the start. Systems that let teachers observe their own personal biases, participate in self-reflective practices, and help students gain power in the classroom provide much better opportunities for successful student outcomes even in early childhood settings.

Additionally, although research on mental-health consultations and professionals paints a very positive picture of the practice and approach, little of this research has examined racial issues in its practice. In my experience in the field, many ECMHC are White women; they come from positions of power. Teaching staff (particularly those of color) who interact with them sometimes feel as though their opinions and knowledge were not equally valued by the ECMHC. Also, although one of the goals of ECMHCs is to be culturally competent and unbiased, CRT would suggest that not all are exempt from projecting their stereotypes or positions of power into their work.

Thus, in examining preschool expulsions and their effects on black boys, using a CRT lens is helpful to explore the factors of the high-stakes accountability movement,

neuro-biological considerations, and gaps in the systems of professional development of preschool teachers. Also, the remediation that has dominated the early care field in response to the needs of children of color and children of less-affluent communities can be understood through the concepts of equity traps and the culture of power within classrooms.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the design and methodology of this study, which examined the experiences of parents who had preschool-aged children that were expelled from early child care settings. In addition, the effect of expulsions on the entire family was explored. Multiple methods of collecting and analyzing data are described.

Research Design

A qualitative, multi-case study approach was used to address the research questions. The theoretical assumptions about how people learn that frames this work is social constructivism, an approach which assumes that individuals try to gain an understanding of the world around them and that the meanings of these experiences are subjective (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, knowledge is created as opposed to being objective, and is constructed as individuals interact with their environments and one another (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). One's theory of knowledge consists of shared historical, political or cultural meanings, which are shaped by individuals or groups of people. Participants in this study had opportunities to work collaboratively (through focus groups) and individually (through one-on-one interviews) and were able to construct and share knowledge about their experiences. Social constructionism informs us that meaning is social—requiring the experiences of the participants to involve interactions with others (teachers, child, parents and family members), not just one individual.

The early care and education field has a range of beliefs on how children best learn, develop, and make meaning of their world. Social construction views allowed me

to address a set of assumptions and questions regarding Black boys and how we value their existence in preschool settings and in the world. Children are part of the community that child-care settings offer; however, the question is how are images of Black boys being constructed by the adult caregivers in their lives? Who determines what behaviors disqualify a child from being a "good" citizen of his community within a child care setting? Do expulsions brand Black boys as failures? Identities are socially constructed and are constantly being examined by one's self, peers and teachers. Who gets to shape how these identities are formulated for Black boys?

I drew from two qualitative methodologies: case studies (specifically, descriptive, multiple-case studies), and grounded theory. Case studies involved collecting data using different methods and forums, including face-to-face interviews, focus groups, letter-writing exercises, group dialogue, and child temperament profiles (online questionnaires filled out by parents). Using multiple qualitative strategies allowed me to present a complete description of a phenomenon within its context (Yin, 2003). Additionally, case studies offered an opportunity for a multi-perspective analysis, which can strengthen findings based on comparing and contrasting aspects of the data (Yin, 2003).

Cases can also provide texts for grounded theory analysis. Grounded theory offers an opportunity for open coding-analysis: the process of naming, identifying, categorizing or labeling things, categories and properties to interpret or explain data. Using the method of constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Straus, 1967), I took information from my data sources and referred it to the topics of my conceptual framework, looking for themes and ways to keep the data and theory in constant interaction (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Participants

Participants in the study were five mothers of six African-American, preschool-aged boys (two of whom are twin brothers) who had been expelled or "pushed out" from one or more child-care programs. Two of the parents are Caucasian, and three of the parents are African-American. One parent has lived in and out of drug treatment programs, jail and assisted-living housing and one parent owns her home. Three parents currently work and two do not. Three children (including the twins) do not have an involved father in their lives. One child has a father who is inconsistently in his life and another child has a father who is actively involved with raising him.

Additionally, two African American early-care professionals who work in center-based child-care programs were interviewed to gain insight into how expulsions occur and how programs respond to or modify behavior. One is a center director for a subsidized (Title 5) child care program who has worked in the early childhood field for several years. In her experience as a director she has expelled 10 children since 2009. Of these 10 children, 2 were girls and 8 were African-American boys. "And that's really hard and I really agonize over that," she said. The other early childhood professional is a head teacher who has worked at a private (Title 22) nonprofit center for over 20 years; during that time, the center never expelled any children.

Context of the Study

The focus groups were conducted at BANANAS, Inc., a child-care resource referral agency located in Oakland, California, committed to serving families and child care providers in Northern Alameda County. As one of the first such services in the United States, BANANAS helps families understand their options for choosing and using

child-care and other children's services through workshops, classes, and support groups on a variety of topics. BANANAS administers 10 alternative-payment programs to help low-income families receive financial support for child care. Although I have been an employee of this organization for the past 14 years, my research efforts have no affiliation with BANANAS, Inc. other than use of space. Individual interviews were also conducted at BANANAS, in participant homes or at an agreed-upon location.

Instrumentation

The only instrumentation used in this study was the 65-question Preventive Ounce temperament questionnaire (Preventiveoz.org, n.d.), which is an online series of questions that five parent participants filled out. The temperament profile rates each child on nine different traits:

(1) Sensitivity: How sensitive is your child to temperatures, textures, or to small changes and novelties?

(2) Distractibility: When involved in something, how easily can your child be distracted by noises or other events?

(3) Activity level: How much movement does your preschooler show during the day or night (while sleeping, dressing, eating, playing)?

(4) Intensity: How intense are your preschooler's reactions to positive, negative, or new situations?

(5) Adaptability: How fast does your preschooler adapt to intrusions, transitions, or changes?

(6) Approach or withdrawal: Does your preschooler initially approach or back away in new situations or from strange people or things?

(7) Frustration tolerance: How easily does your preschooler become frustrated with obstacles or limits placed on his/her behavior?

(8) Regularity: How consistent and predictable is your preschooler's daily pattern of hunger, eating, sleeping, and elimination?; and

(9) Soothability: When upset, how easily can your child be diverted and calmed? (preventiveoz.org, n.d.)

The profiles resulted in similar scoring across two traits; low frustration tolerance and low adaptability. Additionally there were interesting findings related to the trait of soothability; therefore, I focused on these three traits, as opposed to discussing all nine.

Data Collection

I collected data using a variety of methods including one-on-one interviews, focus groups, writing activities, and use of an online temperament questionnaire. In all data collection efforts, I used digital audio to record conversations along with memoing, and note-taking. I also made follow-up phone calls to the participants whenever there was clarification or additional information needed.

Interviews

Five parents were interviewed individually; face-to-face, using the questions in Appendix B. One center director of a state funded preschool and one teacher from a private center was interviewed, using the questionnaires in Appendix C.

Focus Groups

I facilitated a 3-week focus group at BANANAS, which 3-5 parents attended each night. Focus group protocol can be seen in Appendix D. Each focus group lasted two hours. During the first focus group I collected data through a discussion format.

After facilitating introductions and providing the context to my study, I asked questions of the group.

Participants were also asked to write a letter to their child's former preschool program. The purpose of the letter-writing activity was to offer parents the opportunity to express any feelings to the child-care provider, teacher or director. Instructions for this activity asked parents to provide an explanation of their current understanding of their child's expulsion or push-out, a description of their feelings, how they were meeting family needs for preschool, and any additional information they felt was relevant. Two participants completed the letters (Appendix E) and some of the information collected was analyzed and included in the summarized results of the focus groups.

During the second focus group, participants filled out the temperament questionnaires from the Preventive Ounce (n.d.) which resulted in the system's creating a temperament image of their child. This helped give me a better understanding of how parents viewed the behavior of their child through a temperament lens. It also provided comparative data on similarities or differences in temperament among the boys in this study.

The third focus group focused on the participants' creating a mock parent symposium. Parents were encouraged to create a mock forum in order to inform "the public" of their experiences. The group brainstormed ideas for what they felt were the most important aspects of their experiences and included these as they discussed how to best to format such an event.

To help encourage open discussion, I explained individually and in the focus groups that I understand the sensitive nature of this topic and the importance of creating a

safe environment for parents to engage in discourse and dialogue. Setting ground rules for the focus groups included input from the participants. I also reassured all participants that there is a confidentiality agreement, which we both signed within the informed consent form (Appendix A). I also reassured participants that they would remain completely anonymous. The information collected was used only for this dissertation and would not be used for anything else without written consent from the participants. Audio records and transcripts remain in a secure locked file cabinet drawer in my home. I thoroughly explained to all of the participants that at any point, the interview could cease and the participant could withdraw any comments or statements.

Data Analysis Process and Procedures

Four of the five parents participated in one-on-one face-to-face interviews, as did the center director and head teacher. Angela did not have a one-on-one interview but did participate in all of the focus groups. Additionally, four parents participated in a 3-week focus group which two to four parents attended each night. Two parents also chose to write a letter to a former director or family child-care provider from which their child had been expelled or pushed out (see Appendix D3). Themes in the letters were common to the interviews and focus groups, so these data were combined. Although I thought data from this activity might be different because it was private and written, parents were just as passionate and expressive in the letters as in the focus groups and interviews

I conducted a cross-case analysis in efforts to identify themes and patterns across the individual cases in my study, constantly comparing these themes with my conceptual framework. The categories of my conceptual framework were: neuro-biological factors, gaps in professional development of preschool teachers, and the high-stakes

accountability movement. The information from all data collection (focus groups, letter writing, temperament profiles and interviews) were analyzed through open-coding. Once I transcribed the data and gathered common themes, I further coded these themes into subthemes or categories by blending topics. Systematically organizing my data in this manner allowed for consistent categories associated with the conceptual framework.

Using aspects of Critical Race Theory throughout data analysis and constant comparing methods offered additional considerations as to how racial identities can be shaped or formed for Black boys in early learning settings. CRT also raised issues in the context of social connections, power in adult-child relationships and professionalism within the early childhood workforce. Most importantly CRT provided a framework for understanding how structural racism exists and how institutionalized practices, policies, or cultural representations reinforce different factors that perpetuate inequalities within racial groups. It allowed me to ask: How do the beliefs, stereotypes, and attitudes towards preschool-age Black boys shape teacher or environmental interactions, behavior modification techniques, relationships, or rules?

Validity and Reliability

Typically reliability is used to evaluate or test quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003). However, according to Patton (2002), reliability and validity are also important for any qualitative researcher to take into account while designing a study, analyzing results or judging the quality of the study. Considering reliability helps in assessing good quality research, involves explaining the context of the study and generates understanding (Stenbacka, 2001). In efforts to ensure this study was reliable, I participated in a weekly reading and writing group with other doctoral students in my program. In these groups

we discussed our work and we all read and gave one another feedback on a multitude of information. Additionally, I met with my Chair Linda Kroll, to go over the process of coding and received advice about how to look for themes and categorize the date. Last, I met with Helen Neville, a temperament specialist and co-founder of preventiveoz.org (the site on which parents filed out temperament profiles on their children); she reviewed the temperament profiles and agreed with my analysis.

To ensure validity, I used a qualitative research strategy called triangulation; case studies are identified as a triangulated strategy (Tellis, 1997). Triangulation can occur through comparing theories, data, investigators and/or methodologies and help to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations (Stake, 1995) and to control bias (Mathison, 1988). Using triangulation helped me to understand multiple perspectives and assisted me in developing meaning with my data. Figure 2 shows the various sources of data that were triangulated to address the research questions and conceptual framework.

Sources	Focus Group	Writing Activities	Parent Interviews	Center Staff Interviews	Temperament Questionnaire
Research Question 1 What are the experiences of parents who have preschool-age children who were expelled from a child care setting?	X	X	X	X	X
Research Question 2 What was the impact of the expulsion to the rest of the family? How was the entire family affected?	X	X	X		X
Conceptual Framework	X	X	X	X	X

Figure 2. Triangulation of Sources of Data in This Study

Background of the Researcher and Potential Bias

As a professional in the field of early childhood development and an employee of a non-profit organization that provides (a) child-care referrals; (b) trainings to parents, and (c) trainings to child-care providers and center teachers, I have a lot of firsthand knowledge about day-to-day child care issues, including those related to managing behavior, as well as overall gaps in this field. However, as a researcher it was imperative that I not apply my own professional experiences to interpret a problem or gap in then research topic but instead that I rely on the views of the participants to construct meaning (Creswell, 2009) about the phenomenon of preschool expulsions and acknowledge that these meanings stemmed from cultural, historical or personal experiences. Parents' descriptions of these experiences are given in Chapters 5 and 6.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This chapter describes the participants in this study; it provides some background information, including brief narratives about the parents and the developmental trajectory of the children and their child care pathways—how they were expelled or "pushed out" out of a child care setting. Information collected from two early-child-care-center staff was also collected. Each personal story illuminates the dilemma of how we best serve all children without allowing the system to set them up to fail. Stories can also help us to view and understand behavior through a critical race theory lens rather than through a deficit lens which focuses solely on the behavior of the child.

Chapter 5 discusses themes that emerged from interviews and focus groups which addressed the research questions of this study: (1) What are the experiences of parents who have preschool-aged children who were expelled from a child care setting? (2) What are the temporary and lasting effects of the expulsion on the entire family? Chapter 6 discusses findings related to this study's conceptual framework. Based on grounded theory and constant comparison, the data for both chapters were coded with consideration to a CRT lens. The parents and children in this study are described next.

Parent and Child Backgrounds

Tiffany is African-American. She has three children and is a single parent. She has been in and out of the workforce and decided to stay out of it to focus on her son.

Donte is described by his mother as a "bearer" meaning he takes on the burdens of others and life. Between the ages of 1 and 5, Donte had been in nine different child-care environments. He started his early-care experience in family child-care. When he was one, his mother pulled him out of the program because it had too many children in

care and had violated its licensing requirements. Donte then went to a different family child-care provider where he was cared for between the ages of 1-2 until he was "pushed out" of this program. The family child-care provider told Tiffany that her child could no longer attend the child care program because she "could not handle him." Based on suggestions from former care providers, the mother next chose therapeutic-center-based care which specialized in serving children with emotional or behavioral difficulties. However, the mother pulled her son out of this environment after a few months because some of the children "had way more behavioral problems that were negatively affecting my son." The son then attended a half-day subsidized center from the age of 2-3, while simultaneously attending a family child-care program during the second half of the day. At age 3, Donte was expelled from the state-funded preschool center (despite the center's no-expulsion mandate). Per the recommendation of the center staff, Donte returned to the therapeutic nursery at age 3. After one year, Donte left the therapeutic nursery to attend a pre-kindergarten (pre-K) program in efforts to prepare for kindergarten. Donte was expelled from the pre-K program and enrolled in another family child-care setting: the last child care setting before entering kindergarten.

Melissa is a Caucasian single parent who works full-time and owns her home. She adopted her son from an orphanage in Ethiopia when he was seven-months-old.

Sultan is described by his mother as a "great negotiator." In the orphanage, Sultan was neglected and suffered from physical developmental delays. At the time of his adoption, he could not sit up. His mother believes that the neglect he suffered has contributed to some of his sensory issues and behavior. However, Sultan is now on track in his physical development and is not currently experiencing the same delays that

occurred during infancy. From age 1 to 3, Sultan was in six different early-care settings. His first early-care experience was in a family child-care program. His mother pulled him out of this program, as she felt it was not a "good fit." The second program was also a family child-care program from which Sultan was "pushed out." The third location was a center. The mother felt that the program "pushed out" her son so she pulled Sultan out of that program. The fourth program was a family child-care provider who constantly reiterated that the mother was unable properly to care for her son. Therefore, the mother pulled her son out of the program. The fifth program was a family child-care program in which Sultan was "pushed out." The mother pulled her son out of the last early child-care center due to marginalization he experienced there.

Octavia is African-American and works fulltime. During her son's early child-care experiences, she received a child-care subsidy which assisted her in paying for the care. In 2010 she lost her subsidy due to budget cuts and her son was out of licensed care for 20 months. During this time the grandmother of Peter helped care for him.

Peter is described by his mother as a "superhero." He is biracial (White father, African-American mother). Of all the boys in this study, Peter has had the most expulsions and/or "push-outs." From the time he was 8 months old to 5 years of age, he has been in 10 different early child-care settings. Peter started in family child-care when he was four-months-old until he was one. It was a good experience; however, the family moved, so he went into a different family child-care setting closer to his new home. After just a few days, the mother determined that it was not a good fit and moved him to different family child-care. The mother again determined that this setting was not a good fit, but only after her son had experienced several incidents of exclusion. Peter stayed in

the fourth child-care setting from one to two years of age but experienced incidents of exclusion and complaints about his behavior and was "pushed out." "My son is not an alien," Octavia said. At this point Octavia also lost her child-care subsidy due to workforce issues and child-care budget cuts, so Peter went to a part-time state-funded center-based pre-K program. Peter attended this program until he was age 3½, but was expelled in less than a year, and then stayed home with his grandmother till age 5. Octavia decided to leave the workforce due to the lack of child-care funding her subsidy once provided. "I was also afraid to place my child anywhere else because of all of the rejection he faced so early in his life."

When Peter turned five-years-old, he entered kindergarten. However, since he had a difficult time with other children, the teachers and administrators recommended that he attend Transitional Kindergarten (TK). Peter was "pushed out" of kindergarten and entered a half-day TK program at a different school, while spending the other half of the day in an after-school child-care setting. Peter was eventually expelled from the TK afterschool program he attended. This was his 10th early child-care setting.

Angela is an African-American single-parent who has two children. While pregnant with E'mann, Angela spent five days a week for four months at Kaiser, getting an intravenous infusion. Angela had been injured on the job, became disabled and was unable to continue working. Healing from multiple surgeries, Angela had to rest a lot due to the several medications she was taking. Her injury also interfered with her ability to care for E'mann when he was younger, and so her interactions with him were limited when he was younger. During this time, she depended on her four-year-old daughter to

help with bathing and changing diapers. The father was in and out of the household and not much help to the mother or children.

E'mann experienced language delays and articulation problems early on due to health issues he suffered with his tongue. This created anxiety around eating and E'mann would not bottle-feed, which made it difficult for Angela to find child care. Many providers were unwilling to care for him due to the extra work and time it took to assist E'mann with feedings. One provider assisted for a while by meeting up with Angela in different places so that she could breastfeed and return to work or by keeping her child-care program open so that Angela could come feed the child on her lunch break.

In addition to the problems E'mann had with his tongue, Angela had limited ability to care for him because she required surgery. The medications she took for several months post-surgery made her sleep eight hours at a time on any given day. Angela found the separation from her son during this time very difficult, and persisted in trying to bond with him: "I would put on my Mommy hat, regardless of how I felt and how much pain I was in." However, one day E'mann fell on her arm and she had to receive another surgery to fix it. As E'mann got older his problems with his tongue remained, and he would not sit down and eat like other children in his early day-care settings. By age 2, E'mann was expelled from a family child-care setting for scratching and hitting another child.

Trina is Caucasian and has five African-American biracial children, two of whom have been placed in child protective services and are no longer in her care. She has been in and out of drug-treatment programs, assisted-living programs and jail; however, she is now much more stable and is raising three of her children. When describing her twin

boys, Trina stated that "I love everything about them, their personality, the way they act. What is challenging is their behaviors. And it's getting worse and worse over time. They're a handful. It gets real challenging."

Jayden and Jordan are biracial, mixed African-American and Caucasian. As infants until the time they were two years old, their grandmother and Trina's adopted mother cared for them. They started their early child-care experiences at age 2 in a family child-care setting. Trina received several complaints about her sons and feared they would be expelled. At age 3, they were "pushed out" of their first and second child-care settings, with similar responses from both providers. At this point Trina was adamant about having her boys tested for their behavioral challenges. Jayden and Jordan entered their third and fourth family child-care programs part-time, while simultaneously attending a center-based therapeutic preschool, which offered therapeutic support and child care. Jayden and Jordan were pushed out of both family child-care settings, but remained in the center care program from ages 4-6. Both were eventually diagnosed with attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and a sleep disorder, and are on medication for these diagnoses.

Experiences of Parents With Children Expelled From Preschool

Parents in this study shared several common experiences including having children who displayed behaviors that adults found difficult to manage, which contributed to multiple placements in early child-care settings. Parent feelings, attitudes and beliefs were categorized by their self-image, parent learning, how parents questioned discipline, factors of race, relationships with early child-care providers and professionals, and teaching practices of early learning environments. The themes for these topics are:

(1) child-care program: context/interaction: (1a) behavior leading to expulsion or push-out, (1b) consequences of behavior, and (1c) communication; (2) parent self-image; and (3) parent learning, including discipline practices differing from childhood experiences.

Child Care Program Context/Interaction

All of the boys studied had attended either family child care (FCC) or center-based (C) care. Both types of child-care programs are licensed and regulated through community-care licensing. Family child-care is offered in the homes of providers, while center-based care occurs in a building with no residential occupants. FCC programs are eligible to be licensed for 6, 8, 12 or 14 children; centers can be licensed for close to 100 children. Expulsions and push-outs occurred in both types of care.

Behavior Leading to Expulsions or Push-outs

In interviews and focus groups, parents said the following types of behaviors led to the expulsions or push-outs of their children at different times: talking back, not talking nicely, not sharing, being overly emotional, being too hyper or too loud, hitting, not napping with the group or problems sleeping, explosive behavior, not listening, not standing in line, not sitting properly to eat lunch, moving around too much, not sitting still in circle time, screaming, being difficult to soothe, using bad language, the inability to get along with others and/or reasons unclear to the parents (they knew there may have been behavioral concerns, but the expulsion occurred unexpectedly). Most of these behaviors are indeed negative, and parents were honest about admitting that at home they also experienced some of what the child-care providers described. However, one of parents' biggest frustrations was providers' lack of consideration for other aspects of the child, such as the child's developmental trajectory.

Through an examination of the developmental trajectory of all of the boys in this study, we can better understand what factors may have contributed to behaviors that were deemed challenging and often misunderstood. For example, although Sultan started off with physical developmental delays (due to neglect in his country), his verbal skills were not delayed; by the time he was in a child-care setting he had developed great negotiation skills. When framed through a deficit lens this could seem disrespectful or annoying, as Melissa often heard from child-care providers. But as Melissa described, “He is an incredible negotiator and he will not stop. He is not even being disrespectful, he is just arguing his point, and he is good at it.”

In contrast, E’mann was born with speech delays; his frustration with not being able to communicate fully contributed to the ways in which he responded behaviorally, “He doesn’t always want to use his words and it is so much on him, you can see it because his face will change and he will kind of scrunch over, and then his behavior will, whoa, explode.” However, child-care providers perceived his behavior as uncooperative, and Angela constantly had to educate providers on how to support her son. She even provided pictures on card-stock to help them communicate with her son.

All parents acknowledged that their children often displayed behaviors that were difficult to manage and they did not entirely blame the teachers for the problems that ensued in the child-care programs. One mother said, “I hate that the situation is that way, but I don’t necessarily blame them in the moment, and think that they are bad teachers. I think that they are managing the best that they can, given the circumstances.” Instead parents expressed frustrations about teachers’ use of negative behavior-modification techniques and what felt like inequitable and, sometimes, irrational responses to the

behavior, which often left their sons isolated and labeled. This also interrupted development of more healthy and nurturing relationships with providers or teachers.

Consequences of Behavior

Parents reported that teachers grouped their children with younger children, gave them timeouts, wrote their names on the board, isolated them from group activities and general playtime, separated them at naptime, excluded them from performances and graduations, and labeled them. The consequences of the behavior contributed to the negative self-image of all of the children in this study.

One of the most horrific consequences to the behavior involved the decision of a child-care program to sequester Sultan from the other children during naptime. Melissa described what she discovered during a random drop-in to her son's child care program:

> There was one day I picked him up during rest time and they had like a cubby room where the kids hung up their stuff, and it was a separate little closet. I mean there was no windows, and they had him sleeping in there with the door closed. I had to wake my child up, and he just starting wailing, he is not that kind of kid. He just started hugging me and crying, and saying, "Mommy I am in here, I am scared, I am by myself." And so she (the teacher) was like, "I talked to the principal and we are going to get the door cut in half, but he just won't stay on his mat, so I have to put him in here. I need him to stay on his mat." I said, '"Well, from what I understand, what his capabilities are, it is obviously not going to work for him to stay here." And they were like, "Well, yeah, you know, sometimes it just is not a good fit and yeah, I understand if you need to look elsewhere." And I had paid up front, and I am like, "Will you reimburse me?" And they were like, "Yes! We will reimburse you." They wanted him gone.

Isolation and exclusion from group activities were the most common consequences that the boys experienced. There was not much encouragement or effort made to engage the boys in group play, and for Melissa this did not happen until Sultan was four years old. He eventually settled into a different child-care setting that was truly a good fit for him and had more positive experiences because his teachers used hands-on

methods that encouraged inclusion in play. When he was excited he often used his body without much caution and this would cause disruption in an activity or with his peers. In previous child care settings, Sultan was often isolated from group play because of this. However, his new teacher held his hand, walked with him and talked with him about how to approach the group of children at play. This helped to create much more successful social peer interactions. Literature supports that children show better peer interactions when caregivers encourage group interactions (Rosenthal, 1994).

Isolation and/or exclusion of the Black boys in the various child-care settings are exceptionally detrimental methods of behavior modification that obstruct the development of social competencies, positive self-images, and potential to build positive provider-child relationships. To reinforce the healthy development of young children, nurturing relationships are essential (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) and fewer behavioral problems occur with children when child-care providers and teachers develop closer relationships with the children (Peisner-Feinberg & Burchinal, 1997).

In earlier experiences, Sultan had been sent to the bookroom for not cooperating with other children or for unconscious distractible or disruptive movement. Melissa was not necessarily against the move to the library because she felt that her son often needed a place to just "chill out." However, what made this a poor behavior modification technique was the fact that Sultan and the only other African-American boy in the child care program were the only two students who were ever sent to the bookroom to "calm down," especially during group activities. This sent a loud message as to who the "bad boys" were and what the bookroom represented. To the rest of the students it was a quiet and inviting room of learning, for Sultan and the only other African-American boy in the

child care program, the book room became a place of punishment. These isolation tactics contribute to the ways in which Black boys and their learning within a child-care program are valued. Using a CRT lens, this example is evidence that cultural and racial identities are hierarchically organized in early childhood settings and that different identities are accorded different values and places in the hierarchy (MacNaughton & Davis, 2009). The ways in which the only Black boys in the child care program were unequally disciplined, placed them at the bottom of a racialized hierarchal structure and taught the children early on in life that they were valued less than the rest of the students.

Octavia also mentioned hierarchal structures as she described her four-year-old son's experiences with multiple occurrences of isolation and of unintentional, specialized grouping with specific children (often through play).

> There was certainly a hierarchy (referring to children in care) and there was definitely a group of little kids that my son played with that were the more, active, like, you know, I guess you could call them the "problem children," and all of the parents of these kids said, "Well, my son or daughter has ADD or this or that," and my child played with those kids and he wasn't really encouraged to be a part of the population.

Although temperament and child development theory suggests that children at the age of four often choose friends who match their own temperaments and interests (Neville, 2007), "they are also learning about more complicated three-way relationships" (Neville, 2007, p. 79), which may require adult support. Sadly, in multiple ways, these hierarchal structures within today's child care settings, similarly align with the child-care systems of plantations in the 19th century, where Black boys were isolated, exploited, labeled and removed from daily, nurturing adult-child relationships and peer relationships.

Peter was also limited in his participation and isolated from two of the child-care center's major events, a Christmas pageant and a graduation. For the Christmas pageant,

Peter had to sit with a teacher while everyone else had singing parts. The teacher was literally holding Peter and another child. Peter was also excluded from many aspects of the graduation ceremony because of his expulsion; although the program allowed him attend, it did not allow him to be in the group pictures. Octavia recalls,

> It just felt like it he was being punished for making their job more difficult instead of being committed to meeting him to where he was at. I expressed that and it was like, "No, we love your son, but these are these things that we have to do."

Parents also reported that children were shamed and negatively labeled on a daily basis in front of the entire group of children in care. For example, Sultan was subjected to a red card on the board with his name on it, indicating that he was having a "bad day," as a result of "being bad." This occurred multiple days of the week for several weeks at time, and became the norm. Research supports that early labeling has the potential to stay with the children into higher education experiences (Rist, 1977). Additionally, when daily occurrences of isolation and labeling begin early in life at such a crucial formative time, these experiences can have such long-term effects as substantially increasing the chances of going to jail (Ferguson, 2000). This pipeline to prison is starting in early child hood settings for Black boys, where instead, these environments should offer a time of positive development and encouragement that supports the transition to higher education.

Not only did punitive consequences to behavior lead to marginalization and labeling of the boys, but parents also reported their children's emotional regressions, such as acting like a baby after being grouped with younger children or regression with potty training. Consequently, this also led to the development of negative self-images and affected developmental trajectories for some of the boys. Boys' attitudes about going to

child care also shifted from positive to negative, as one parent described, “After really liking going to school, he hated going to school and everyday he would cry.”

Early childhood pedagogies and practices are the precursor for school readiness. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1993), the three common criteria often used for school readiness are: (1) student academic skill development, (2) attitude, and (3) behavior. Research demonstrates that Black boys are achievement oriented and very engaged in the process of learning, and have been shown to have very positive early schooling experiences (Tyson, 2002). However for the boys in this study, their attitudes about school and learning and self-esteem were adversely shaped by these negative consequences of behavior and one-size-fits-all approaches to learning.

Painfully, the ways in which the parents felt about themselves also began to crumble as all five felt responsible for discord with the child care programs. This discord stemmed from communication issues with the child-care providers and teachers, which in turn gives context for relational friction that caused a lot of stress for parents, providers and children.

Communication About the Child

In this section, the theme of communication refers to discussions between parents and teachers regarding the boys’ behavior and the expulsion or push-out process. It also provides additional context for interactions between the boys and providers or teachers in the early child-care setting. Parents said there was variation in whether the parent or provider initiated such conversations. Parents also noted lack of communication and abruptly being told they had to leave the program, or over-communication regarding

issues that felt like everyday normal occurrences that did not necessarily have to be reported. Additionally, communication often felt condescending to the parents.

All of the parents in this study were aware of the difficult behaviors their children often exhibited either at home or in the child-care setting. However, these behaviors were not always clearly discussed. As a result, many parents were shocked when their child was abruptly expelled from the program. As Octavia described it, "There is not any communication, and then all of a sudden, 'Well this is actually really a problem,' and boom, your child is out."

The center director of this study said that she herself had uncovered mistakes and has since learned not to delay communication. She and her staff would make valiant efforts to support a child with challenging behavior and really try to make it work for periods of six to nine months at a time, for example. However, letting the parents know that there was a problem with their child after such a long period and without prior notice could come as a surprise and cause understandable concern for many parents. The solution for this center was to implement a 30-day assessment period in which a child had to adjust to the program. Through observation, staff meetings and parent-teacher conferences (that always began with a positive statement about the child), they made the decision as to whether the program was a good fit for the child.

Parents said that communication regarding expulsion or push-out not only came abruptly but also teachers' explanations about behavior were not clearly discussed, even when parents asked for updates and discussion. Parents felt as though they had very little information regarding daily occurrences or problems preceding the expulsion or push-

out. Melissa describes one child care program as being very "vanilla" about how they responded when she would ask what was wrong. Additionally she stated,

> They never said anything about it (her son's behavior). Everything was just "fine, fine, fine, fine" for almost a good solid year I would ask a lot of very specific questions: how did he sleep, that kind of stuff and they would give me more matter-of-fact about what he did through the day.

Octavia was also perplexed about the lack of communication,

> I really could never figure it out. We always felt like we were on the fringes and, they could never pinpoint anything that was specifically happening with him, never. And they could never tell me, "Oh we will work it out." I always felt like my son was being pushed to the side, or, you know, he wasn't really being heard or cared for.

The parents concluded that had communication been regular and more specific, all parties would have benefited.

Research supports that good communication between staff and parents (as well as good communication among staff) in early child-care settings is a prerequisite for high-quality care and education of young children (Doherty-Derkowski, 1995). Supporting the emotional development of a child requires that adults work together positively and share information that is unique to the individual child, in efforts to support the "whole child."

As well as noting lack of communication, all five parents in this study reported dismay over receiving constant phone calls from child-care providers or center-based teaching staff regarding the behaviors of their children. They all concur that calls were excessive and many of the reasons for the calls felt unwarranted. Tiffany described an incident in which her son stood on a table and she received a call:

> Why do they need to call me? If he ain't knocking somebody upside the head, if there ain't nobody bleeding, don't call me because he done jumped on the table. Why you calling me because he jumped on the table? Tell him to sit his self down and get back to you teaching your class!

Octavia also said she allows for freedom of play at home. She and her son have actually cracked eggs on the floor at home, made messes, stood on chairs, and played in very dynamic ways. For them, standing on a table was not a big deal—it was acceptable play.

Other phone calls included the topics of not getting along with other children, not sleeping, moving around a lot, and not participating in structured activities. The parents felt that these issues were common issues of all children in child-care settings and that more warranted reasons for being called (especially while at work) were: (a) biting; (b) running off school grounds; (c) getting hurt; (d) being sick; and (e) specific tactics on how a provider or teacher responded to a behavioral concern.

Although a majority of the parents' experiences with communication were negative, parents also reported positive experiences on a few occasions, but only when the parent requested or initiated the communication. In one instance, a parent described her experience with positive communication, and said she was able practically to apply techniques she had learned from past negative experiences of being voiceless.

> I said I really want to make sure we are not just focusing on the discipline. So she (the teacher) wrote a really long email it was beautiful, about how he's a great kid, this is her vision, we want to put together a success team and want to look at what happened at the last school because it's a really important piece in terms of supporting him.

Positive parent-teacher communication not only helps better to support the child; it also can prevent assumptions that child care providers might make about the child or family. However, according to research and the parents in this study, barriers to positive communication between parents and child-care providers or teachers can include: lack of time, differences in backgrounds (culture, language, socio-economic status); stress; differing values; differences in viewing roles; types of experiences and differences in

experiences; notions of openness; communication abilities; communication discomfort; need to feel valued; and different views of the needs of the child (Klein & Miller, 2007).

According to the head teacher in this study, child-care providers and teachers hear information from the children during various activities throughout any given day and they have to make sense of that information.

> We're seeing, what they're talking about at circle time, it seems a lot heavier these days…they're talking about cops, "my daddy went to jail," or those kinds of things." In another instance, during an activity about capturing night sounds one child describes, "gun shots, ambulances, police cars and car alarms."

When children are expressing such experiences, whether directly related to them or not, teachers may make their own assumptions about the relationship of this information to the child and family, particularly when communication barriers exist. Parent-teacher conferences, when conducted appropriately, can provide a safe place for sharing information about trauma, family structural changes, home life happenings, or any experiences that may effect changes in a child's behavior. The head teacher reinforced that providing this information helps create a context for responding to behavior, although parents may feel differently. Privacy and the best interests of the family and child are often at the forefront of a teacher's mind. Yet, this can be disrupted due to stereotyping, negative assumptions about Black boys, and previous negative encounters with parents or children.

Parents also expressed concern about "condescending advice." All of the parents had grappled with yet succeeded in managing their children's behavior. Like any parent, they experienced frustration, confusion, and questioned what to do, yet all made strides to get support and information that led to making practical changes at home with sleep, food, discipline and much more. When child-care providers or teachers made

assumptions and/or gave them instructions to do things that they were already doing (such as not giving children sugar or ensuring they got a certain number of hours of sleep at night), parents were offended. However well-intended child-care providers or teachers were, parents felt teachers viewed them as uneducated about parenting practices that could best support their children, which had adverse effects on parent self-images.

Parent Self-Image

The constant negative interaction with child-care providers, teachers and the environments that perpetuated how "troubled" their children are played a big part in self-confidence for the parents of this study. All of them grappled with the concept of who they were as a parent and often questioned the quality of their parenting skills and knowledge. Each struggled with negative feelings, self-doubt, confusion and voicelessness, particularly within the first year that complaints began. One parent said, "I don't know if I would call it complaining, but then again I didn't have much of a voice, I was really more apologetic." Another reported, "There is this fear, like, I don't feel like I am in charge, and I just think that's wrong. I just didn't want to screw up again, right?" A third parent said, "I was, sort of, I was flummoxed, like, I was having my own challenges here, behavior-wise and they were sort of reinforcing this, he is a bad kid, and you are a bad mom, kind of thing, everyday."

Some child care providers or teachers are aware of these parent feelings and interpret them as shame. According to the head teacher, when parents are told that something may be developmentally or behaviorally wrong with their child, they feel a sense of mourning similar to that of death:

> When you find out something wrong with your kids, you have to go through the same experience as mourning, because basically when you go into a meeting with

> the teacher and they tell you your child is different than the other children and that they're not even in the developmental range of the other children in the program, it's the death of their idea of their child. And that's why they (parents) have such a hard time with it, and if you study the steps mourning deaths, the first step is denial, then you get angry, then there's hopelessness, like there's all these steps emotionally when in mourning and it's actually what the parents go through. Even though no one has physically died, the death of their idea, their image of their child has been completely shot down and it's very hard to receive.

The head teacher also stated that she has experienced this with many parents and has had to work diligently with parents when they are in denial, assuring them that the child-care staff just want to help the child. She added that nurturing the parents includes support through all of the stages. Teachers and child care providers have a moral responsibility to support children and families in their care. Especially in early childhood, teaching and learning happens largely in the context of relationships. Therefore parent-provider communication is essential.

Unfortunately for the parents in this study, most of the providers who cared for their children did not often express this sort of sensitivity and insight towards the parents' feelings. But the parents continued to believe in their children, and although they went through horrendous experiences, they learned a lot about how to support and help their children succeed.

Parent Learning

Through stressful experiences with their boys in multiple child-care settings, parents learned how to choose a child-care program, how better to communicate with child care providers, teachers or other early childhood professionals, how to navigate support services, how to stay positive about their child and themselves, and how to improve parenting and discipline techniques (although not all of these are discussed in this section). One parent said, "I have learned throughout all of this that, there's a

difference of what you want for your child and what is right for your child, in terms of school."

Developing strong communication skills with child-care providers and teachers was one of the most important things most of the parents learned over time. Angela is the one parent in this study who did not have as big a learning curve in becoming a strong vocal advocate for her son, although she started off that way. Based on the developmental trajectory of her child, she learned early on to communicate his struggles to all of his child-care providers or teachers. Unafraid to be vocal, she frequently made requests. This often caused frustration for child-care providers or teachers.

> They (teachers) just couldn't stand that I would request certain things. My child is only four, yes, I wanted an IEP done on him. He needs special, speech therapy: "he is fine, he will grow out of it." And no, he should not be saying "milt," it's *milk*. And why he can't he say that? Because he doesn't know where to place his tongue in his mouth. I felt like I was, and I still am, and will be until he passes, his advocate, to be that voice for him and others cannot do that, and when I do advocate for him, then it's like, "Oh, you are doing too much."

Although this was not the experience initially for the other parents, when they did get to this point of being strong advocates and communicators, they received similar negative responses from child-care providers or teachers. Somehow speaking up for their children, even when it was done cordially, was interpreted as annoying, frustrating or threatening, even though parents never intended to threaten the teaching staff or child care providers to better serve their children.

Another shift in learning had to do with keeping their images of their children positive. This was not always easy, as parents had been struggling to manage their own frustrations and biases about the behavior of their children. "I knew he was a great kid and I kept telling myself." "I am optimistic about my child, I am not optimistic about the

school system." Rejecting negative comments from teachers and reframing them more constructively was a "survival tactic." Parents learned to trust that they know their children better than anybody. This became key when navigating necessary systems before, during and after the expulsion or push-out process, as parents searched for new child-care programs, created concrete action plans, figured out how to access support services, provided emotional and psychological support for their children and themselves, maintained balance for the rest of the family, and dealt with issues related to work.

Parents showed clear demonstration of resiliency. According to the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework (Center for the Study of Social Policy, n.d.), parent resiliency is "the process of managing stress and functioning well even when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma." (p. 1). Research concludes that how parents respond to stressors in their lives is far more important than the stressors themselves (McGraw-Hill, n.d). These parents all demonstrated that they could still maintain balance in life and figure out how to push through the process of creating a more positive early schooling experience for their children. These parents exemplified the notion that although difficult, not all stress is bad and that experiencing certain adversities offers a neurological basis for positive development, such as a greater propensity for self-reliance (Seery, 2011).

Part of this self-reliance and resiliency developed as parents took the initiative to be proactive and learned to spend time observing their children on-site at child-care programs. Parent involvement or engagement is associated with higher academic achievement (Henrich, 2010) and parents engaged in preschool are more likely to stay engaged in elementary school (Henrich & Blackman-Jones, 2006). One parent stated,

“Observing has helped. Being able to be in the classroom is more of an open-door policy with his teacher, in addition to emailing and talking to her.” Four parents agreed that although it was sometimes difficult to visit because of work, transportation or other family obligations, being engaged with the child-care setting was necessary. They gained a better understanding of how their children interacted in the child-care settings and of behavior modification practices—although the parents questioned whether teachers showed genuine teacher-child responses when parents were present. So when communication with the child care providers and teachers was skewed, parents could rely on their observations of the child-care settings to better understand the environment and its overall effects on their child.

However, one parent disagreed that parent engagement was her responsibility. Trina had many life stressors and depended on the child-care program to be the sole disciplinarian of her child. She strongly felt that it is the sole responsibility of child-care providers and teachers to maintain the behavior of her children while they are in care because that is what providers are paid to do.

The issue of discipline was another avenue for parent learning; yet, here we find conflicting perspectives. Constant scrutiny of the behavior of the boys often left the parents perplexed about discipline strategies. In their experiences, they received a lot of advice on how to discipline their children. As one parent said:

> I feel like I spent three years just feeling, I wasn’t consistent with my discipline, I was such a bad mom because I didn’t know how to be consistent with my discipline. And then, I guess I grew up, I figured it out. But now if anybody didn’t think I was consistent enough with my discipline, just listen to me now calling doctors daily to get them to call me back about stuff, it’s just that advocacy—it’s so much energy, but I’m doing it!

Angela shared an example of a writing technique she used with her son when he would respond poorly to a directive she gave him. Rather than just telling him, “Don’t talk to your mother that way,” she created a game that shifted her power to her son and allowed him to “write her a ticket” when he did not like the way something was said or done. This way they could talk about the “citation” in a more light-hearted manner.

Discipline and Differences from Parents’ Childhood

Part of the conflict with discipline arose from the parents’ childhood experiences with discipline. They had a strong desire to do things differently with their own children Over many occasions the parents of this study were told to spank their children, contrary to their personal childrearing practices. Tiffany shared that when she did not have resources for accessing professional help, she turned to friends: “When I talked to friends about it they were like, ‘Yey, well you gotta make sure he gets spankings.’ That’s the problem. People would tell me hecka crazy stuff. ‘You just need to spank him.’” Another parent shared, “I grew up being disciplined like, pretty severely, so if I was acting off-the-hook, I would have been disciplined for it and I didn’t question that. But I wanted my son to have a different experience.”

Three of the African American parents expressed how this type of discipline is acceptable in the African American community, especially for boys who are commonly reared as “tough.” One of the Caucasian mothers also agreed with this and tried and failed at this type of discipline because it just didn’t work for her children. Tiffany shared her experience with these cultural practices but was also “strongly against them.”

> In the African-American culture, it’s like “oh, you need to whoop him.” I am not about to just whoop him, for him being a natural human being. I am not about to do it, I am sorry. I felt like that’s what a lot of my people wanted me to do and I am sorry, I am not about to fall into that category. You are not going to put him

> or me into a box and you are not going to take away my parenting skills naturally and make me hurt my son in order for him to be henpecked so he can fit into your program.

Another difference in rearing was with regard to managing emotions. There was a lot of discussion about how Black men are reared to be tough, not to cry, and not to express emotion. But this too was a stereotype that these parents did not project on their children. One parent said, "My son has been taught to express himself. My son is being raised to express emotion. I did not grow up in a household where that was acceptable. There was no communication in my home around emotions." These issues of discipline and managing the emotions of Black boys have long been part of the Black community. Octavia shared how staff in one of her son's early childhood settings deemed his behavior inappropriate when he was expressing developmentally appropriate human emotion—behavior that ultimately contributed to his expulsion:

> They call my son out for things that are absolutely ridiculous, right? Like the fact that he cries when someone is making fun of him. That's a problem, that my son is having an emotional response! The teacher was specifically pulling me aside and telling me my son is being emotional. That's really upsetting for me, right? Because he is having a human experience, he is struggling in a classroom, this is his first year in a classroom environment since he was three-years-old and he is five, and, you know, these kids are making fun of his hair, and he gets upset and he puts himself on time out, or in a corner if he gets over stimulated, and you are telling me that he is overly emotional? But then again, it's like I am being told this has been going on all year, and I just felt like now it's getting worse. I mean, that for me, that is a problem, and I think, this is how these expulsions happen.

In the focus group, Tiffany responded to Octavia, "So you (the child care provider) were having a human emotion while the child was having a human emotion?" Octavia responded: "My child is a human being and was having a human experience. Instead of being a child who is having a problem, my child is a problem." Melissa added, "There is this inability to see the child as a human being who is developing, and who

needs care at whatever level, and then addressing it there. I think that race absolutely plays a part in that." Angela agreed: "They (the boys) are not supposed to feel anything" This conversational exchange showed that parents related to each other regarding their experiences and those of their sons, but it also raises a larger issue around how Blacks boys should be socialized. The dehumanization experienced by Peter reveals one of many insensitive approaches to managing behavior and emotions, as well as a longstanding issue within the Black community, which is the notion that boys need to be reared to be tough and strong. Crying is a sign of weakness and familial and societal expectations of Black boys suggest they should act like men at a very young age.

There are many theories as to why or how this has been socially constructed; however, masculine theory provides the basis from which this derived. Described by Berger, Wallis, and Watson (1995), masculine theory is, "a vexed term, variously inflected, multiply defined, not limited to straightforward descriptions of maleness" (p. 2). Additionally, social discourses and historical factors play a role in how individuals are shaped (Bleecker et al., 1995). When considerations of race and class are applied to masculinity narratives then radical shifts occur (Stecopoulos & Uebel, 1997). This is important to consider because it helps show why early child-care settings are so crucial for helping to construct positive social values and norms that support Black boys and that do not diminish their developmental potential. According to Davis (2003), the most influential factors that account for low academics for black boys (K-3) are (1) student attitudes, (2) social organization of schools, and (3) masculine identity. In higher education, Black males perceive schooling activities as feminine and irrelevant to masculine sense of self (Noguera, 2003).

Through an examination of the child-care program context, behavior that led to expulsions and push-outs and the consequences of the behavior, we are able to uncover aspects of parents' experiences of expulsions and push-outs. Parents described communication issues and self-governing strategies that affected their learning, parenting strategies and self-image. In addition, parents examined the ways their own childhood experiences affected how they responded to their children's behavior and contradictions between the social construction of Black boys and how boys should be cared for in early child-care settings. All of these factors relate to the second question of this study: What are the temporary and lasting effects of expulsion to the entire family?

Temporary and Lasting Effects on Family

Participants in this study identified temporary and lasting effects of the expulsions or push-outs on their families. The temporary effects included: (1) workforce problems, (2) damage to familial relationships, and (3) effects of child-care subsidies. The lasting effects were: (1) child poor self-image, (2) parents becoming advocates.

Workforce Problems

All of the parents in this study experienced temporary employment issues. Many of these problems persisted at work because parents were called multiple times throughout the day regarding the behavior of their children. Often these phone calls required the parents to leave work to pick up their children from child care. Two parents had quit their jobs and one parent was on the verge of quitting her job. Tiffany said,

> I had to quit working a couple times, because of the childcare situation. To have to stop working, because I didn't have appropriate childcare, I am like, "Wow, isn't this why I got childcare, so I can go to work?" And now I can't work, because the childcare situation is not working.

Another parent said,

> I was totally screwing up at work, because I would go to work late and I would be at work and would be so upset. I would leave him there in the morning and I couldn't get any work done, so I would get out of work as soon as I could, pick him up and take him home. Work was tough, because I wasn't going and I was trying to keep him out of school that was constantly pushing him out and making us feel unwelcomed.

Having such workforce issues such as these led to reliance on other family members for support, as well as to strain or damaged relationships with family.

Damage to Familial Relationships

Two parents revealed that their other children were often neglected due to the time and attention needed to respond to the children in this study. One parent described how friends and family blamed her for her son's troubles in school.

> It was very discouraging and, confusing (in response to expulsion). I am like, I don't understand this, I don't know how you could put a baby out of a school. It made people point the finger at me and what am I doing wrong, even my family– they kind of switched on me.

Octavia had to rely on her mother to assist with child-care for 20 months when her son was expelled or pushed out of various child-care programs. Due to time spent away from work as Octavia tried to support her mother and son, she lost her job and child-care subsidy. This arrangement created a strain on the mother-daughter relationship, which added to conflicts that arose from differences in their childrearing practices. Issues with the workforce generally affected parents receiving alternative payment (AP) subsidies requiring parents to work or be in school in order to maintain the subsidy.

Effects of Child-Care Subsidies

Four of the parents in this study received child-care subsidies at some point during their children's early child-care experiences. These parents voiced concern that they were treated differently by a variety of child-care programs or providers because they

received government funded payment support and as a result their children were expendable.

> Because it was guaranteed money (subsidy payment) versus someone who paid the full amount, and for me, who was on this kind of sliding scale tuition, she (the child care provider) had zero tolerance with my child. I was told by my provider, "I am not going to put up with this (child's behavior) when I have these parents that are paying $800 per month on time, and their child gets hurt because of your child." She had to make sure she protected that money coming in, so I was told, "Your child has to go." So that day, I get just a little letter, no discussion, no nothing, I am sorry, this is the way it is. Bump, out of here.

CRT reinforces that structural inequalities are not only related to race, but also to socio-economic factors that contribute to the value of social groups and that academic disadvantages exist for poor children (compared to middle-class peers) entering school (Secada, 1992). This explains the derivation of the Head Start program.

The early childhood field often argues that better and more affordable child care is an economic investment, producing greater benefits to society later on. Yet Polakow (2007) advocated for viewing child-care through a human-rights lens as opposed to just an economic lens. Children who are expelled and pushed out of child care should be supported as a human right, not only because they receive an entitlement of a child-care payment subsidy. Black boys deserve the same quality experiences and equal opportunities to receive positive outcomes as other children in early child-care settings do. Socio-economic status or government funding should not dictate the quality of care. In the case of parents who had to rely on government funding to support their child-care, providers made it clear that they were not on the same level playing field as parents who were paying full fees out of pocket. Hence, their Black boys were negatively viewed, especially if they were labeled as "problematic." This negative view of the child, which many child care providers acquired, was transferred to the children and internalized.

Lasting Effects on Children's Self-Images

Probably the most detrimental outcome of expulsions was the lasting effect they had on the self-images of the children in this study. From age 2, all six children in this study internalized that they were "bad boys." Tiffany described how multiple changes in her son's early-care environments and multiple responses from early care professionals regarding "bad" behavior led to marginalization and labeling, which has perpetuated negative self-images. "It has been messing with his self-esteem, and after a while, he is like, okay, 'I am just stupid, I am mad at myself. I am never good, I don't do anything good.'" Melissa also described her son's self-image:

> He was the bad kid. I mean, these are three year olds, and they knew that my son was like, the "bad kid," and it was just so obvious. He was, the outsider, the bad kid, and he knew he was the bad kid, he would say it. He still does, it is still one of my like, most heartbreaking things, all the time he says, "I am a bad boy Mommy, I am a bad boy, I am being a baby, I am not listening," and that comes from school.

Research demonstrates that there are great dangers in labeling and its long-term negative effects (Ferguson, 2000, 2003). In his formulation of labeling theory or social reaction theory Becker (1963) suggested that there are two types of deviance occurrences, primary deviance and secondary deviance, where labels are created socially and not necessarily as a result of the behavior of an individual. According to Becker, primary-deviance labeling occurs when behavior involves breaking the rules yet the rule-breaking individual is still viewed as conformist by self and others. Secondary deviance differs in that labeling of the "rule-breakers" is public and negative, and an individual labeled as deviant can be rejected by social groups, which can lead to further acts of deviance, and deviance becoming part of the individual's identity (Becker, 1963). Deviance calls forth social reactions and this can shape how individuals might internalize impressions of their

behavior and eventually act them out. Secondary-deviance labeling appears to be the experience of the boys in this study, and research demonstrates long-term detrimental outcomes later in life, associated with greater risks of poverty or jail (Ferguson, 2000).

Rist (1977) demonstrated how easily academic labeling can occur consciously or unconsciously; he studied children who were classified into groups in kindergarten by a teacher who only spent eight days with the students. These classifications were based on socioeconomic status and the teacher's assumptions of the children's academic ability. Those classifications stayed with the children several years as they progressed to higher-grade levels; each year, new teachers accepted the labels of the children given by previous teachers. One of the major contributing factors to the gap found between Black children and their peers are low expectations, because they undermine a sense of competency and increase learned helplessness (McKown & Weistein, 2008).

The self-images of the boys in this study were negatively shaped by disciplinary practices that reinforced that the boys were not valued in a variety of child-care settings. Additionally, based on low expectations of behavior, providers and others probably anticipated less potential for more positive outcomes for Black boys. Yet positive outcomes could also come from the difficult experiences of the boys, as parents became amazing advocates for their children and showed resiliency during these stressful events.

As mentioned above, all of the parents in this study become strong advocates for their children. This was demonstrated through (1) better communication with child-care providers, teachers and early care professionals, (2) the design of a mock parent forum/symposium, and (3) advice they would give to other parents in a similar situation.

What Parents Wanted to Communicate

Mock parent forum. Parents were given the task to create a mock parent forum to develop and plan an event that brought awareness to their experiences and the impact of expulsions. Together the parents decided it would be best to create a symposium which brought together stakeholders, including politicians, faith-based leaders, non-profit organizations, child-care providers, teachers, early childhood professionals, medical or health professionals and parents. In sharing their knowledge of what makes effective, quality child-care, parents also wanted to take into account the needs and knowledge of community members. They also felt empowered and excited to create such a forum.

The title of the symposium would be *"Navigating the First Years."* The day would entail an opening plenary session with a dynamic speaker, several breakout sessions, panels, and a closing plenary. Goals for this symposium would be to have parents feel empowered, attendees feel well-informed about the impacts of expulsions and push-outs, stakeholders more encouraged to support and advocate for Black boys in early child-care environments, and parents and providers to have candid one-on-one and group discussions around actions of prejudice. The success of this symposium would depend on parents and providers telling their stories in concrete and honest ways, with the opportunity to participate in self-reflective exercises that explored expectations of behavior and biases specific to active boys. On-site quality child-care would be needed so attendees could join the 20 breakout sessions, workshops, and panels:

Breakout workshops that were brainstormed are: (1) What am I looking for in daycare?: Family child care versus centers, and pre-preschool and entry to elementary;

(2) Temperament; (3) Evaluating what's best for your child (as opposed to what I think); (4) Navigating agencies such as BANANAS: Practical tips and tools you can walk away with; (5) Understanding the gap between preschool and kindergarten (public level); (6) Understanding Transitional Kindergarten that is free for five-year-olds that aren't ready for kindergarten; (7) Public policy forum: Signing and creating a petition that advocates for these issues at the state level; (8) Accessing resources; (9) General support for parents; (10) Mentorships: How to finding preschool mentors that look like the boys through connecting with Black fraternities; (11) How not to project biases and stereotypes towards Black boys; (12) How to teach academics through activity and movement; (13) "Where's your manual?": How to make Black boys feel more empowered beyond February; (14) How to foster self-esteem in Black Boys; (15) Reframing how we view Black boys: Turning around labels that get internalized; (16) How not to create labels; and (17) Creative writing: techniques to redirect negative behavior by using a positive response (such as the "write a ticket" example above). Parents also suggested panels with different groups of participants. These included: (1) parents that have experienced their child's expulsion; (2) Black male middle- through high-school-aged students who discuss their educational experiences; (3) lobbyists and representatives from the representative districts of the parents of this study; (4) transracial or transcultural adoptive parent panel (of all nationalities) who have adopted Black boys.

It was evident that the parents drew from their personal experiences in creating this symposium. Also, child-care providers and teachers would be asked to attend a workshop on what today's children are experiencing: i.e., living in a single-parent home, interacting with diverse families, what it is like to be a four-year-old, and communication

with parents. Parents expressed a strong desire to educate providers and teachers on teaching using new techniques validated by research. They also wanted to incorporate an evaluation process at the end of the day; as a means to capture the learned experiences of the participant. Insistent that all child-care providers and teachers go to every breakout session and take pre- and post-tests to assess their learning and identify gaps in knowledge was a demonstration of how the parents thought about measuring the accountability of the overall event.

Advice to other parents. Parents were also asked what advice they would give to other parents who were in a similar situation related to expulsions or push-outs. Figure 3 captures a summary of their experiences:

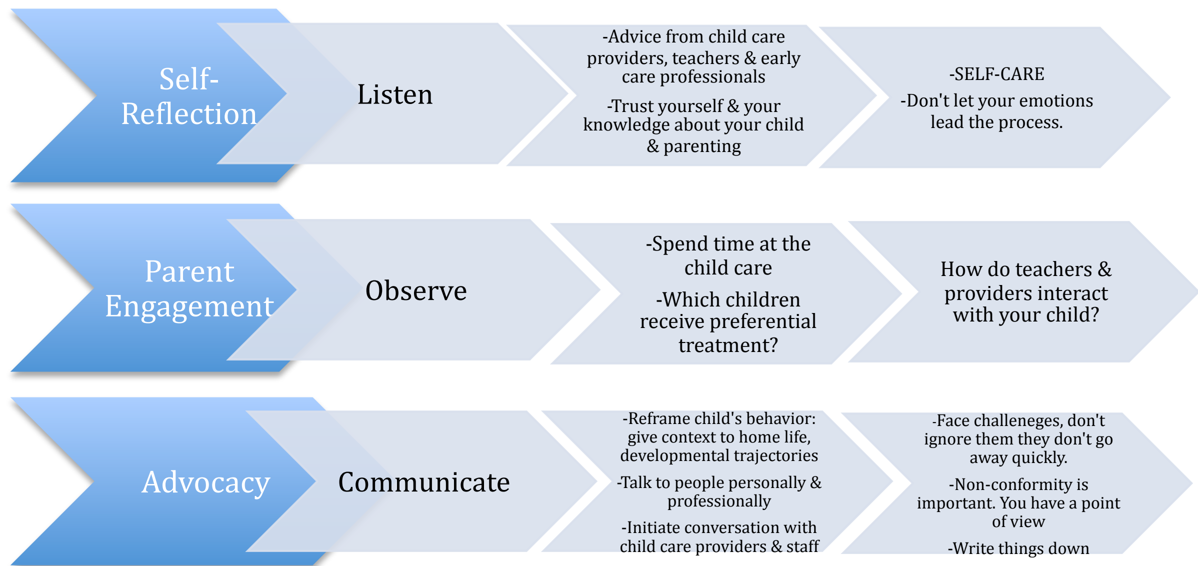

Figure 3. Advice for Other Parents.

Next, Chapter 6 presents findings based on categorizing the data according to the conceptual framework, using a CRT lens. Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the research findings categorized in terms of the conceptual framework: neurobiological considerations, gaps in professional development, and the high-stakes accountability movement. Much of what was mentioned in the methodology section about the social and emotional construction of Black boys in early child-care settings is unpacked in this chapter. In order to have a whole picture of the issue of expulsions or push-outs and parents' experiences with them, it is important to view them through the lens of the conceptual framework; here we can investigate how Black boys are valued, socialized, treated and disciplined in early child-care settings.

Critical Race Theory and Parent and Provider Assumptions

Critical race theory is relevant throughout the data, as revealed through parent and provider assumptions regarding the boys of this study, the learning institutions, and the people within them. Parents' experiences have been influenced by: (a) assumptions about an ideal child-care provider; (b) assumptions about future educational experiences; (c) myths regarding skin color; and (d) positive attributes of their children that are viewed negatively (e.g., intelligence). Provider perspectives and assumptions that were revealed were: (a) staff behavior influenced by negative stereotypes and (b) cultural differences in how staff responds to behavior.

The Ideal Care Provider

All five parents in this study assumed that the ideal child-care provider for their sons would be an older African-American woman. Reasons for this preference ranged from personal preference to the desire to have someone like grandma, to have a

disciplinarian, or to have someone of the same culture, race, and values as the parents, who would respond to the child in a like-minded way and make learning easier. For example, Angela acknowledged that the best schooling experience her son ever had was when he attended an all-Black school for boys. E'mann (the oldest of the boys in this study) accelerated in this learning environment. In a study that concluded that race does matter in higher-grade levels, Dee (2004) found that over a year's time, Black male and female students had significantly higher test scores in both math and reading when their teacher was Black. Similarly, male and female White students had significantly higher math scores and White boys had higher reading scores when their teacher was White (Dee, 2004). Having a teacher of the same race had a much greater impact for Black students than White students.

Unfortunately, the preferred choice of older African-American child-care provider did not work out for any of the families in this study. In fact, parents' values and expectations about learning were contradicted when the providers responded negatively to the boys in their care. The lack of quality care and parents' unsupported assumptions about who might best care for their children initiated development of parents' mistrust in their choices and in the children's learning environments.

Assumptions About Children's Future Educational Experiences

Parents then came to assume that their boys would continue to have negative experiences as they got older and entered higher education. Based on labeling theory, parents had a valid concern about the impacts of such experiences on future schooling. Melissa stated her concern:

> And I guarantee you, I am pretty confident that it's going to be the educational system the whole way through, that is going to be our biggest challenge. I'm sure I will know every principal my child will have throughout his schooling.

Parents' mistrust of the institutions that teach and care for their children in early child-care settings led to parental planning for the type of learning institutions that would be best in years to come. Two parents thought private schools would offer their sons a more positive learning experience during grades K-12. Since all of the parents are either currently exploring kindergarten or grade school choices, they were concerned about how their sons would be treated in higher learning.

As Octavia was navigating kindergarten and had decided to enter her son in a TK program, she realized that Black boys were not being treated equally in the district she was in, and that parents of Black boys should be concerned. During a campus visit she encountered two kindergarten teachers that had both met her son and one told her,

> "You need to be careful in this district because they are not looking out for us." And she's African-American, she's Black, she literally came out to me and said, "Just between you and I they are not looking out for us. You need to be really careful with the choices that you make with your son."

This acknowledgement from one Black woman (a staff person at the learning institute) to another (the parent) provides evidence that there are systemic racial issues that affect how Black boys may be treated or prioritized when it comes to learning.

Race and Cultural Issues

Assumptions around skin color were also revealed as parents spoke. It has been noted that people with lighter skin in this society have more privilege. For example, white privilege has made an important impression on the way systems and laws were created in this country and in the way CRT was formalized. In Black culture there continues to be controversy about whether lighter-skinned Blacks are more privileged.

This dates back to the times of slavery when lighter-skinned Blacks often had more privileged roles as house slaves compared to those of darker skin, who were generally field slaves with more demanding physical work. However, for Black boys in this study, skin color was not a factor in how well they were treated in early child-care settings. Four of the boys in this study had lighter skin (three are biracial and another has lighter skin and green eyes), but their parents felt strongly that their children were treated poorly and had no greater privilege because of their lighter skin or physical features. One parent said, "My son is biracial and that has seemed to NOT keep him from being discriminated against, or people making assumptions about him. He is seen as a disruptive Black boy, that is what they see."

Race continues to play a significant role in determining inequality in this country (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), yet skin color is only one of many factors that contribute to the cultural aspects of people and how they are treated in everyday society. There are also a myriad of other cultural factors besides race that raise concern and perhaps interfere with provider or teacher-child interactions.

The director of the state-funded preschool acknowledged that there are cultural differences in how her Asian and African American teachers respond to the behaviors of the Black boys in her program. The director expressed concern that her staff are fearful of the Black boys, and she admitted to seeing teachers project negative stereotypes when responding to a Black boy who might be displaying challenging behavior as compared to other children in the program who demonstrate similar behaviors.

> When a Black boy is aggressive there is a totally different reaction than if a non-Black boy is aggressive. It is more negative, these teachers shy away and I always end up having to be the disciplinarian and that is not fair.

Tiffany shared similar feelings as she connected several child-care providers' treatment of her son to a larger societal fear of Black men: "Some people are afraid of little Black boys because they have such a stigma and there is such a stereotype on Black men and so they question, 'What are these Black little boys going to be like?'" These fears and assumptions not only influence teachers' use of behavior modification tactics (or lack thereof) but also contribute to teachers' negative views of children's more positive attributes, including their intelligence.

Positive Child Attributes Viewed as Negative

Three of the parents discussed their frustration with the contradictory messages many child-care providers or early care professionals expressed about the children. The parents were constantly told how smart, sweet, loving or intelligent their children were, and valued receiving some positive feedback. However, the providers were also often unsuccessful with managing their children's behavior and engaging them in more positive ways. Hence these positive characteristics of the boys were viewed as a threat and ultimately turned into negative characteristics.

> It really bothers me is that everyone keeps saying that he's really, really smart. This feels very threatening. It feels like that's a threat. People telling me that my young African-American, biracial child is so intelligent but he keeps getting in trouble and having problems, but no one can bring that out (the child's intelligence). No one can really, really cultivate all of these wonderful things that they say they are seeing. And, in fact, if he's really smart, then he's gonna know, really clearly that you don't want him there.

These issues could perhaps be addressed through pedagogies that promote cultural socialization. Cultural socialization is defined as "practices that teach children about their racial or ethnic heritage and history; promote cultural customs and traditions, and promote children's culture, racial, and ethnic pride, either deliberately or implicitly"

(Hughes et al., 2006, p. 749). Known benefits to creating home and school environments that embrace elements of culture for African American preschoolers include fewer emotional or behavioral problems and higher cognitive test results (Caughty et al., 2002). Therefore it is also parents' responsibility to expose their children to such environments.

Neurobiological Factors and Temperament Profiles

Temperament theory provides a basis for understanding innate behavior and provides a context for understanding that responses to behavior, learning, discipline and the overall environment are subjective. The exploration of neurobiological factors is relevant to this study's conceptual framework because it involves the ways in which we consider brain development, temperament, the importance of play, movement, and gender in relationship to learning. This section describes the data analysis related to the (1) temperament profiles; (2) how parents involved professional help, and (3) psychomotor development and styles of cognition related to learning and Black boys.

During one of the focus groups parents were asked to fill out a temperament profile/questionnaire created by Preventiveoz.org. Four of the five parents filled out a temperament profile of their child. The questionnaire consists of over 60 questions, which result in an immediate online profile of a child's temperament. The profile represents the parents' perceptions, as well as a program perception in efforts to help parents learn general strategies for managing the highs or lows of their child's temperament; to discover what specific behavioral issues are normal for a child's temperament; to see when and how often these issues might occur in future years; and to get information tailored to a child's temperament for managing each issue a parent is likely to encounter.

In this study, the most common shared trait on all four of the temperament profiles was a low frustration-tolerance. Children with low frustration -tolerance may back away from an activity that seems too difficult, feeling discouraged or angry (Neville, 2007). In contrast, children with a high frustration-tolerance will often naturally try things over and over again even if the task is difficult. Children with low frustration-tolerance, however, feel frustrated by limits, so they test rules repeatedly and give up easily (Neville, 2007). Parents indicated seeing low frustration-tolerance at home, and child-care providers mentioned similar experiences with the boys to parents. Such triangulation of data about the four boys suggests that these boys experienced low frustration-tolerance. This evidence corresponds with a longitudinal study conducted at Cal State Fullerton (2012), which concluded that school success is determined by frustration tolerance. Additionally, frustration tolerance was determined to have a greater effect on school success than an IQ (Presented at the International Temperament Conference, CSF, 2012).

The profiles also ranked two of the boys as very high in movement (also referred to as energy level) and two as moderate and moderately high. This corresponds with data in the high-stakes accountability section of the conceptual framework, which describes the difficulty that boys have adhering to structured daily activities that promote learning but limit mobility in the process.

The second most common trait was low adaptability; all of the boys scored as moderately slow to slow-adapting. This means that extra support or time may be needed to support these boys when intrusions, transitions or changes occur, which may be challenging for child-care programs that do not follow consistent and regular transitions

and routines (such as eating lunch or napping at the same time). Typically for slow-adapting children or "natural planners," the more that is known ahead of time, the better, because predictable routines help with transitions. An interesting finding related to this involves Sultan, who scored the highest on being slow to adapt and yet experienced the most transitions in one program, having been moved to three classrooms within a 4-month period. The last move was into a room with older children where the expectations of sitting down and sitting still had increased. This was extremely difficult for Sultan. Unfortunately, his difficulties were interpreted as a behavioral issue as opposed to an issue of temperament (or environment) and/or another consideration—the effect of trauma.

Moving from one care setting to another can be a cause of trauma, which is the traumatic effect of an expulsion or push out. What is interpreted as a disciplinary challenge is actually the child responding appropriately to a traumatic experience—protecting himself from further trauma. Especially in the case of Sultan, who is adopted from Ethiopia and experienced significant trauma and movement early in life. "If both genes and environment produce dysfunctional symptoms, the effect of a stressful environment on a person already genetically sensitive to stress is likely to be magnified" (Perry & Szalavitz, 2005 pg. 24). In the context of the ecological model Sultan is demonstrating behavior that is an evolutionary protective response that is warranted. It may not be effective for what he is trying to relay however, is explanatory from a neurobiological lens. Trauma behaviors that are adaptive due to having been in a traumatic situation are not necessarily adaptive to a school context. When teachers and child care providers understand the neurobiology behind the behavior and the importance

of deescalating a behavior and helping a child co-regulate as opposed to increasing the feelings of threat and hypervigilance, which is what often occurs when children are put in timeout, isolated and experience the anger of an adult, it can transform not only the relationship but the feeling of professionalism and the child's sense of safety. Without consideration to this, we create systems that become another form of marginalizing or "othering" a child.

In contrast to several complaints from child-care providers and even parents about the boys being difficult to manage, the profiles indicated that all but one boy was usually "easy" to "very easy" to soothe. This is an indication that if adults could change their responses or reactions to the behavior, the boys might have the innate capacity to be easily soothed or calmed down.

Based on their own experiences and communication from child-care providers and teachers, parents in this study repeatedly questioned, "What's wrong with my child?" Based on the developmental trajectories, many parents knew early on that they needed to seek professional help to support their children, yet other parents felt conflicted about this because they did not believe there was anything "wrong" with their child. The age of the child played a significant role in when or how to assess their children as many of the issues in child care arose at two years of age. In some cases child-care providers or teachers prematurely or inaccurately diagnosed the children or misinterpreted or did not understand their behavior. Two parents described their experiences with this:

> And then the only thing that was said in hush, behind my back, which always got back to me, was he had ADHD. And so I don't even know what that means at two- or three-years-old. Later, they told us that the flip side of ADHD, if that is in fact an issue for him, is hyper focus. So there's hyperactivity and not being able to focus on anything and then the other part of that is if your child is not responding when you are trying to get their attention. It was confusing.

> Because he had a speech delay thing, they didn't take the time to get to know what his needs were, and expected him to be just like the rest of the kids. Instead of saying, "Let me try to work and figure out how he communicates." And there wasn't anything such as speech therapy for a two-year-old then, because he had a language thing, and he got so frustrated, he would fall down and pass out, so he could be standing with so much emotion, then whoosh, he was on the floor. And they (child-care staff) were like, "What is wrong with this child?"

For the most part parents agreed that seeking professional support for their sons was extremely helpful and necessary; support included, but was not limited to, play therapy, mental-health consultations, choosing therapeutic child-care settings, individual counseling, and discussions with their pediatricians. However, navigating the systems and resources to receive the help was very difficult.

> I ended up just recently going to an occupational therapist (OT) just through my insurance. There were no resources anywhere else. I find that so shocking. I had to go berserk in my pediatrician's office and get upset and cry just to get an OT appointment.

In addition, these resources or services were often very costly, so access and cost created barriers to parents' obtaining necessary supports for their children or themselves.

Octavia, however, grappled with concern about having her son assessed at the onset of entering kindergarten when there were already so many transitional factors to focus on. Ample research demonstrates that Black boys are disproportionately represented in special-education classes in higher education (K-12) (Noguera, 2003), therefore the concerns that parents expressed about the impact of assessment are valid and reinforce how educational outcomes for Black males can start in early childhood settings. However, recent studies suggest that although boys are more likely then girls to be identified as disabled or delayed in early child hood, minority children (Black, Hispanic or Asian), in the United States are disproportionately underrepresented in early

intervention and early childhood special education (Morgan, P. Farkas, G., Hillemeier M., & Maczuga, S., 2012). Additionally, the parents and the child-care center director and head teacher had similar points of view regarding learning differences between "busy boys" and girls. "Boys will be boys," some said, or as the center director described:

> Boys are more active, they are all over the place, they don't listen. They are kinesthetic learners and so, you have to be able to recognize that and say, okay, well, in my circle time, that means I need to have something active, you know, they jump up and down, they got to do the hokey pokey or do "head, shoulders, knees and toes," or whatever, so I know that for this group, I have to tailor it.

Although none of the boys in this study attended either of the child-care centers that the center director and head teacher worked for, the parents agreed that boys should learn through movement. Neville (2007) suggested that boys play more aggressively than girls do at age 4 because, "a typical boy has more pounds of muscle than a girl…and boys have a strong biological need to exercise and tone their muscles by running, bumping, hitting, pushing, shoving, and throwing" (p 80). Because of this, boys might be in conflict with their environments more frequently (Neville 2007).

Tiffany described her viewpoint on how to teach boys the alphabet, which similarly incorporates the importance of the concept of movement:

> Do something else to teach to the boys using movement, they can't just sit down and go A and B cause that's not where they are. But if they get to jump up and go A and B and C!! You know, and they are doing some movement stuff then they will be more engaged and they would learn it.

All of the parents agreed that without this approach, children get bored in their child-care settings, which led to disinterest in the learning activity and unfavorable behavior. Based on these parental descriptions, the boys of this study may be kinesthetic learners. Kinesthetic learners have often been labeled as hyperactive, or difficult because they have a harder time sitting still to learn and benefit from some type of movement to learn

more effectively. Gardner and Hatch (1989) detail kinesthetic intelligence as the capacity to use part of or the entire body to solve problems and noted a relationship between mental and physical activity. Although the theory of multiple intelligences (see Gardner & Hatch, 1989) is often criticized by academic psychology, educators have shown positive attitudes and acceptance toward it (Smith, 2008), believing that humans do not all learn in the same ways and early learning educational systems should be open to this.

The concept of movement and learning for Black boys also prompts an examination of early research around psychomotor development that dates back to the1930's. Multiple studies (NBCDI, 2011) revealed that African babies scored significantly higher than non-Africans on measures of psychomotor development, including crawling and head posture. Morgan (1976) suggested that when mothers have adequate health care, Black infants are superior in all aspects of development, have more physical energy and are more active than their White peers. Morgan also concluded that schools fall short in providing active environments for successful learning of Black boys because their natural energy levels are not supported. This suggests that child care settings should allow ample space for movement to help learning. Movement may be an integral part of learning for Black children, which may help them learn faster (Hale, 1981). Guttentag and Ross (1972) concluded that Black preschool-aged children have higher ranges of movement levels compared to their White preschool-aged peers from both lower- and middle-class backgrounds. When movement was incorporated into learning, Guttentag and Ross found that Black children learned simple verbal concepts more easily than when taught in more traditional formats (see Guttentag, 1972).

Additionally, Massari and Meyer (1969) found that children who were able to incorporate movement in learning had higher IQ scores.

The relationship to culture and learning inspected through origins of cognition suggests that the play behavior of African-American children and how cognitive styles are perceived results from the unique cultural experience of African-American children (Hale, 1981). This is influenced by the ways in which Black children are reared, socialized and create meaning of the world. Cohen (1971) suggested that the cognitive styles that children develop are based on the ways in which they socialize with families and friends. Through a comparison of two different cognitive styles, analytical versus relational, we can view how child-care environments, pedagogies, and practices are not necessarily aligned with what Black boys may need to have optimal learning experiences.

The analytical cognition style is associated with more “formal” styles of group organization; children living in more structured homes tend to function this way (Hale, 1981). Children in home environments promoting a relational cognitive style experience more fluidity and “shared-function.” Hale’s (1981) work unpacked the roots of Black culture and drew on Akbar’s descriptors of the Afro-American child (Figure 4) to suggest that Black children are reared in ways that are more relational than analytical. Black children or people can also perform or have experiences that are analytical and result in positive outcomes, but cultural factors may influence the relational style.

The Afro-American Child (Akbar, 1975)
Is highly affective Uses language requiring a wide use of many coined interjections (sometimes profanity) Expresses herself or himself through considerable body language Relies on words that depend upon context for meaning and have little meaning in themselves Prefers using expressions that have several connotations
Adopts a systematic use of nuances of intonation and body language such as eye movement and positioning Prefers oral-aural modalities for learning communication Is highly sensitive to others' nonverbal cues Seeks to be people oriented, is sociocentric Uses internal cues for problem solving Feels highly empathetic Like spontaneity Adapts rapidly to novel stimuli

Figure 4. The African-American Child (Akbar, 1975)

Hale also compared the work of Akbar (1975), Cohen (1971)—who outlined two styles of learning and their relationship with schools and outcomes (see Figure 5)—and Hilliard (1976), who summarized characteristics of analytical and relational styles of cognition (see Figure 6). Figures 4-6 have been recreated for the purposes of showing how Hale (1981) combined their work.

Cohen's (1971) research concluded that for the most part, educational systems require an analytical approach to learning seen through requirements to sit long periods of time, to observe and value organized time and schedules, and independent impersonal learning stimuli. Additionally Cohen (1971) stated that regardless of their natural abilities or extent of learning, students who have relational cognitive styles are less likely to be rewarded with grades because they are in an analytical learning environment, where they are more likely to be considered deviant and disruptive.

Analytical Cognitive Style	**Relational Cognitive Style**
Stimulus centered Parts-specific Finds non-obvious attributes Abstracts common or generalizable principle of stimulus Notices formal properties of a stimulus that have relatively stable and long lasting meanings Ignores the idiosyncratic Extracts from embedded context Names extracted properties and gives them meaning in themselves Relationships tend to be linear Relationships which are noticed tend to be static and descriptive other than functional or inferential Relationships seldom involve process or motivation as a basis for relations Perception of conceptual distance between observers and observed An objective attitude—a belief that everything takes place "out there" in the stimulus Stimulus viewed as formal, long lasting, and relatively constant, therefore there is opportunity to study it in detail Long attention span, long concentration span Greater perceptual vigilance Reflective attitude, relatively sedentary nature Language style is standard English of controlled elaboration Language depends upon relatively long lasting and stable meanings of words Language depends upon formal and stable rules of organization Communications are intended to be understood in themselves, i.e. without dependence upon non-verbal cues or idiosyncratic context "Parts" of speech can readily be seen in nonsense sentences Analytic speech characterized by "hesitation phenomena," pauses for verbal planning by controlled vocal modulation and revision of sentence organization to convey specific meaning, since words have formal meanings Sometimes views of self expressed as an aspect of roles such as function to be performed View of self tends to be in terms of status roles	Self-centered Global Fine descriptive characteristics Identifies the unique Ignores commonalities Embedded for meaning Relevant to concepts must have special or personal relevance to observer Meanings are unique depending upon immediate context Generalizations and linear notions are generally unused and devalued Parts of the stimulus and its non-obvious attributes are given names and appear to have no meaning in themselves Relationships tend to be functional and inferential Since emphasis is placed on the unique and the specific, global and the discrete, on notions of difference rather than on variation or common things, the search for mechanism to form abstract generalizations in not stimulated

Figure 5. .Analytical and Relational Cognitive Styles (Cohen, 1971)

Figure 6 depicts Hilliard's (1976) schema for analytical and relational styles of 'The School'.

As it is in general ANALYTICAL		**As it could be** **RELATIONAL**
Rules Standardization Conformity Memory for specific facts Regularity Rigid order "Normality" Differences equal deficits Preconceive Precision Logical Atomistic Egocentric Convergent Controlled		Freedom Variation Creativity Memory for essence Novelty Flexibility Uniqueness Sameness equals oppression Improvise Approximate Psychological Global Sociocentric Divergent Expressive
Meanings are universal Direct Cognitive Linear Mechanical Unison Hierarchical Isolation Deductive Scheduled Thing focused Constant Sign oriented Duty		Meanings are contextual Indirect Affective Patterned Humanistic Individual in group Democratic Integration Inductive Targets of opportunity People focused Evolving Meaning oriented Loyalty
		(Hilliard 1976, p. 41)

Figure 6. Hilliard's (1976) Schemas for Analytical and Relational Styles of 'The School'

Historically, Black children have been socialized by Western views of life that tend to be more analytical, especially when it comes to learning environments and current and past policies that promote learning through high-stakes testing and formal pushes for academic outcomes.

Thinking about learning, culture, styles of cognition, and how schools are structured offers an approach to supporting children where we may see benefits to meeting the relational needs of Black boys in early child-care settings. Preparing children for higher schooling should involve a commitment to the health and social and emotional development of children. The boys of this study have generally not encountered such practices, which demonstrate the need for practices that create equalization in education.

Observing the child-care settings, parents also noted gender differences. They saw girls being more cooperative and willing to sit down, write their alphabet, work on words, and sit still, while boys preferred to play with blocks and toys and engage in more physical activities. This relates to neurobiological considerations as the development of boys' brains and overall nervous systems is delayed compared to girls (Berk, 2002; Leaper et al., 1998); this affects cognitive development, attention, emotional regulation, and the overall "school readiness" of boys, including activity, attention span and academic development (Wardle, 2007). Thus, gender and culture both affect learning and school readiness and help in understanding expulsions in early child-care settings.

Women (especially White women) also dominate early child-care learning settings, and parents observed gender biases in child-care providers and teachers who demonstrated preferences to care for girls over boys. One parent said, "But you see the teachers, and I mean I have very strong images of one in my head that I have experienced already, who are more comfortable with girls." Another parent said, "She (the FCC provider) was not interested in the equitable population of the kids, there was primarily

all girls because it was easier to work with the girls." However, Melissa was less certain about provider gender bias, and exposed her own bias.

> I don't want to say it's like, female teachers can only like female kids, I mean, I am scared to death of little girls. I like little boys, I relate better to little boys and I am sure that there are teachers that are the same way, male or female.

Professional Preparation of Teachers

Having a female-dominated early-child-care field raises questions about homogeneity in education and about the further professional development of the providers and teachers in child care. This portion of the conceptual framework refers to gaps in professional development/teacher training and general workforce problems that affect preschool expulsions. Although there are several issues, this research focuses on four issues in this area: (1) language and cultural differences; (2) educational or training needs; (3) seeking outside professional help; and (4) high turnover of teaching staff.

Language and Cultural Differences in the Classroom

Language and cultural differences often created barriers to the ways in which teachers related to or connected to children and communicated with parents. Three parents experienced frustration around communication when the child-care provider spoke English as a second language (ESL). One parent described how emotional it would be on certain days when she came to pick up her child from her son's ESL provider,

> Her English wasn't great, so our communication, especially because they were always so emotional, because I would pick up my son and he would be really upset, I would be really upset, she (the provider) was clearly frustrated and upset, that she couldn't get through to him!

This was not the case in every circumstance as parents and children interacted with other ESL child-care providers at different sites; positive experiences with ESL teachers were also mentioned.

There were also cultural differences reported in use of tone of voice. The director described her experiences with the staff in her program:

> Sometimes, um, tone of voice with some of the Asian people, can seem like they are screaming when they are really just excited, and they are not screaming, and so that is something that we have had to work on, too. With the African-American staff, what I found really challenging is they react to certain behaviors based on their own experience. They are not always able to separate and remember that these kids are different from when they grew up. I had to really get there, too. You have to temper your responses to some behavior, you can't just go, 'Oh, My God!"

Some communication could be misunderstood, or as CRT might suggest, there could be unintended racial biases in responding to Black boys. When children do not seem to respect adults, it may cause discord and interfere with teachers and children building healthy relationships that are vital to supporting the positive social and emotional growth of children. This is common in many cultures that think children should respect elders. If providers do not consider concepts of child development when interpreting these interactions, there is potential for damage in adult-child relationships. The center director noted, "Sometimes the teaching staff just doesn't have a really good grasp of child development." She added that due to cultural differences misunderstandings still occur. "It's interesting because we still have those cultural issues and differences around discipline, or just even relationships, different things that can still come out, regardless of how much training or education we have." The important deep-rooted issues of culture—values, beliefs, and attitudes—are not prioritized in training. "ECE childhood educators

are not mandated in state certification systems to critically reflect on their group and individual ideologies, racial or otherwise, in preservice programs" (Earick, 2009, p. 8).

Education and Training Needs

Due to limits with time and prioritized topics of training, it is often challenging for child- care providers and teachers to address these issues through self-reflective supervision or practices. This also leads to gaps in overall staff training and professional development.

The center director is well aware of the need to strengthen staff professional development, but feels challenged by other factors involved in operating a center.

> I really believe in that self-reflective process. We don't have time for it and we don't make always time for it, because we have so many other things to do and just the everyday work that has to be done, those priorities.

Many early childhood teachers do not feel equipped to respond to the particular needs of the children who exhibit challenging behaviors (Hemmeter et al., 2007; Kaufman & Wischmann, 1999). For this center, naptime is the only part of the day teachers have to collaborate and discuss issues regarding the children, which limits what can be discussed. This exemplifies the need for more training. The need for further training on distinguishing developmentally appropriate behavior is not limited to challenging behaviors but also includes other developmentally-appropriate issues such as curiosity about bodies and masturbation. Although not further discussed here, cultural issues affect how teachers or child-care providers respond to such issues as well.

Parents in this study also reported that providers often blamed children as the source of their frustration and/or for reactions of frustration. In that case, the providers are susceptible to falling into what CRT refers to as equity traps (McKenzie & Scheurich,

2004)—specifically, the fourth equity trap: paralogical beliefs and behavior. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) defined this equity trap as occurring when "a conclusion is drawn from premises that logically do not warrant that conclusion. In other words, it is false reasoning that involves self-deception" (p. 624). For example, teachers rationalize blame of children when they do not examine or take responsibility for their own emotions or behaviors when they yell at a child or discipline a child in an inappropriate way; but instead conclude that their behavior is only a result of how the child acted towards them or towards other children. This is a subtle issue that the teachers and children may never understand, but racism can sometimes play out in this way.

Seeking Outside Professional Help

For parents, child-care providers and teachers, another identified gap is lack of professional help or access to mental-health consultants or services. Lack of funding for school psychologists, family advocates, mental-health consultants and licensed clinician support services were issues for both the parents and child-care programs.

High Staff Turnover

The field of early child-care produces a high rate of provider and teacher turnover. Low wages or lack of benefits lead people to leave the field. This concerned parents. Not only were their sons being placed in multiple settings and encountering more providers and teachers, but their opportunities to create healthy relationships were disrupted by teachers exiting the field.

High-Stakes Accountability

The high-stakes accountability movement refers to high-stakes testing in the K-12 system; it creates higher academic expectations for children in early childhood and thus

deeply affects preschool-aged children. CRT would refer to intelligence testing as a movement to legitimize the deficiencies of African-American students (Ladson-Billings, 1999). This study's stories of children who were asked to leave their centers reveal that behaviors leading up to a push-out or expulsion were related to the boys' not conforming to structured systems and aspects of daily routines and activities. This raises the question of whether early learning environments are creating a tracking system for Black boys that is not seen until the K-12 schooling systems. An underlying question is whether or not U.S. early-child-care systems promote diverse learning practices that take into consideration children who are high-energy, need to move around, and may be kinesthetic learners. It also reveals that expectations for behavior often contradict behaviors that are deemed developmentally appropriate.

For example, the parents revealed that all six of the boys in this study had a difficult time sitting still, even on a square mat, during circle time for lengths of time that sometimes exceeded 30 minutes. In a focus group, parents shared circle-time expectations and how their children responded:

"They want them to sit still the whole entire time."

"In a square, criss-cross applesauce!"

"They were making them sit down and it was too structured and organized. Too small of a space and a little bit more structure than he could work with. He was like, 'they don't play.'"

"They loved having him in class, he is charming, he is sweet, but he doesn't stay in circle time."

"It's not that he wasn't listening, he was just moving around."

Morgan (1976) suggested that Black children need learning environments that are "uncrowded, open and airy with a great deal of natural light, (and) plenty of private space for teachers and learners…and special non-punitive areas" (p. 130). There is a huge push to promote positive cognitive outcomes for children, however our learning systems do not always support the importance of the relationship of movement and learning. Encouraging children to display play-based learning and social-emotional outcomes as opposed to academic outcomes is a constant debate in early child care environments. However, there is a danger in play-based approaches for Black boys. A recent study conducted by Yates & Marcelo (2014), examined teacher observations and ratings of children's pretend play (imagination and affect expression) and whether these were associated with children's adaptive functioning. The findings revealed that, "Black children who are imaginative and expressive may be vulnerable in early childhood settings, either because they are less well-suited to the classroom environment or because they are perceived to be less well-suited by teachers" (p 9). This demonstration of teacher bias shows how race remains a factor in early child care settings play.

How we prepare children for kindergarten should consider approaches that take into account the whole child. Particularly, since schools tend to consider systems of learning that support analytical styles of cognition and not relational. This relationship of movement and learning was also discussed further in the neurobiological factors section of the conceptual framework.

Parents were also concerned about possible tracking of their children. Tracking refers to how students are grouped in an educational setting based on academic abilities that are usually determined by assessments. These educational paths or tracks are usually

seen in K-12 settings and predetermine which classes students can take in schooling systems; thus, they often end up segregating students based on academic achievement and testing. It is within these systems that the educational achievement gap widens and fewer Black boys are represented in higher-level classes. Based on the treatment of her son, one mother said she was made to feel that her son was prematurely being tracked:

> I would never deny that there could be something wrong, but what I didn't like is that it didn't feel like, even in preschool, where there is no administration and there is no tracking, that there was still a track and a place he was being led to that was different from the other kids in his program.

Often as a result of tracking systems, children are labeled, and parents repeatedly expressed their concerns with this as well as with the marginalization of their sons in their child-care settings, which occurred for a number of years.

The personal experiences of the parents of this study have important implications for our early learning systems. In California, the Department of Education (2010) has released a preschool curriculum framework for appropriate practices related to all aspects of working with children in early childhood, including practical advice about cultural and linguistic issues, social guidance, and much more. However, regrettably, many of these standards and approaches to learning are inappropriately practiced or not applied. Although there are several understandable factors that interfere with child care providers' or teachers' providing exceptional, quality experiences for young children, we must require more at the local, state and federal levels.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study revealed two fundamental issues. First, the act of an expulsion or "push-out" perpetuates systems of institutional racism, which clearly exist in early child-care settings as much as they do in the K-12 system. This is demonstrated from the disproportionate rates of expulsions and the admitted cultural differences between teachers and Black boys (and resulting biases) that often play out in discipline practices. The early years are critical for fostering the positive relationships and learning experiences necessary for building strong social, emotional, cognitive and academic outcomes for children. This study provides evidence that expulsions of Black boys from early child-care settings creates a vicious cycle of negative attitudes and messages towards and about Black boys, leading to harmful labeling, negative self-images, family breakdowns, workforce and other potential financial problems, family strains and other stress factors, although coping with these may also lead to parents' discovery, learning and advocacy (see Figure 7). This system sends the message to Black boys early on in life that they are uncontrollable, can't be handled, are on a path to failure—and are therefore unwanted.

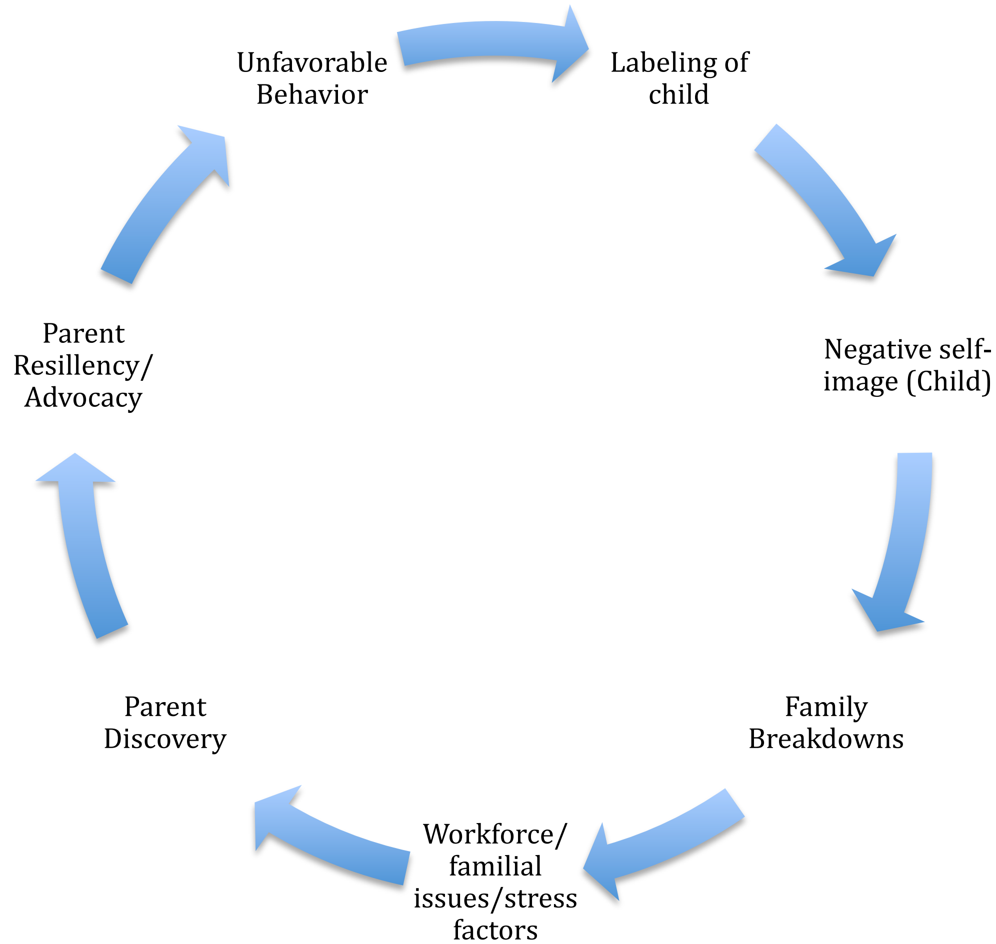

Figure 7. Some Outcomes of Preschool Children's Expulsions

The experiences of the parents in this study confirm that various aspects of the conceptual framework (CRT, neurobiological considerations, gaps in teacher development and workforce, the high stakes accountability movement) do indeed influence the disproportionate rates of Black boys that are expelled or pushed out of their child care settings. It also reveals shocking consequences of behavior: Black boys were isolated and excluded, which left them marginalized and labeled.

A key problem that needs further attention is the relationships among the child, parent, and child-care provider or teacher. As the center aspect of the conceptual

framework, issues of communication, language differences, and structural and cultural racism disrupted these relationships; child-care practices that did not support the Black boys of this study. I believe that the development of these healthy relationships is essential for children to have successful outcomes in their early child-care settings.

Until we are ready to uncover racial disparities everywhere in society (and Black men and boys are affected in far greater ways than any other group of people), we will continue to keep Black boys on unequal playing fields. Historically, U.S. policies and laws have not allowed Black people (and particularly men) to gain full equality (Bell, 1992): education, the workforce, prisons, and other institutions marginalize Black boys and men.

Although the impacts of expulsions on Black boys in this study and the entire family were mostly negative, some parents noted positive consequences relating to shifts in the parents' self-image and development of advocacy skills. For all but one parent in this study, the Black boys were expelled or pushed out of multiple child-care settings. However, parents learned more quickly to assess which certain child-care settings were not the right fit for their children, improved communication skills, and were able to create a symposium around the topic of expulsions where they suggested training and education and considered input from stakeholders in the community. Parents also maintained positive impressions of their children and continued to balance work and family. These unintended consequences demonstrated parental resiliency.

However, parents may not always experience resiliency in this situation. We need more local, state and federal attention regarding harm in zero-tolerance policies. Voices describing early childhood experiences need to be at the table and in the discussion.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of this study included the small sample size, with data collected from only five parents (about the experiences of six children). One criticism of using case-study methodology is that the researcher is unable to provide a generalizing conclusion (Yin, 1993) because of the small sample size. The potential for parental shame was another limitation of this study. To discuss the "unfavorable" behavior of a child could be difficult and could result in parents' withholding information about their experiences. Additionally, participants might have had reservations about sharing their experiences for fear of repercussions or retaliation from their child-care programs or providers. However, this research still provided important and valuable information regarding the previously unheard experiences of parents and families affected by the phenomenon of preschool expulsions and their effects on the child, parent and/or other family members. Additionally, some of these children whose parents I interviewed were already identified as atypical. This is a qualitative study, and therefore not generalizable.

Recommendations

Based on this study's review and findings, I offer several recommendations:

1. Create teaching practices that incorporate uses of temperament theory, and more specifically offer techniques to respond to low frustration-tolerance.
2. Support efforts that increase father involvement. Children who grow up with involved fathers are especially likely to start school with higher levels of academic readiness, are more patient and can handle the stresses and frustrations associated with schooling more readily than children with less involved fathers

(Pruett, 2000); 70% of Black children reside in a home where no father is present (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2012).

3. Recruit males, particularly Black males in early childhood settings, and enhance mentorship programs, such as linking up with local fraternities, so that young boys in ECE can have positive male role models.
4. Promote and increase training in early child-care settings on cultural competency.
5. Increase funding to early child care.
6. Using the parent symposium created in this study, create a parent forum or platform to discuss the issue of expulsions and Black boys.
7. Mandate organizational protocols for regular parent-teacher conferences.
8. Provide more training for preschool teachers on working with children with challenging behaviors. Rather than just focusing on obtaining a higher degree, teachers need more support in responding to the direct occurrences that result from managing challenging behaviors. Teachers in both two- and four-year early childhood educator programs (addressing the social-emotional development and challenging behaviors of children) felt like they had not mastered the skills needed to address young children's challenging behaviors (Hemmeter et al., 2008). Similarly, in two other studies, practicing teachers reported they did not feel competent to address young children's challenging behaviors and considered this a top training need (Hemmeter et al., 2008; Joseph et al., 2004).
9. Conduct further research that assesses racial gaps across different outcomes during early childhood. Between nine-months and kindergarten African-American boys demonstrate lower test scores on cognitive assessments, poorer

health outcomes, and exhibit less secure attachments (Aratani, Wight & Cooper, 2011)

10. Keep the zero-tolerance policies on a federal level and on the radar of the OCR.
11. Bring awareness of the issue of expulsions at the ECE level on all K-12 platforms and encourage inclusion of ECE to the educational inequities discussions.
12. Enhance practices that promote parent engagement in early childcare settings.
13. Mandate lower teacher-student ratios, and expand teacher recruitment and pay.

Final Thoughts

In February, 2014, President Obama announced the "My Brother's Keeper Initiative," which sets aside 200 million dollars over the next five years to support boys of color. Obama stated that,

> Black boys have the odds stacked against them which has spanned generations, and although strides have been made in closing opportunity gaps, Black boys still lag behind in almost every measure. And society has become numb to these issues of Black boys. We assume it is an inevitable part of life instead of being outraged! (Obama, 2014, televised speech)

Obama also contended this is not only an economic issue for the country but a moral one.

We must do a better job to break down structural barriers, especially those that do not support all children. This requires broad effort from multiple stakeholders and must oppose the acceptance of negative institutional climates; especially at the early child-care level. We must call into question discourses of homogeneity in our early learning environments, continue to research the patterns of Black boys and their academic readiness skills, and consider a paradigm shift in how learning and socialization should be constructed. Movement of children from multiple child care settings as result of their behavior is a cause of trauma, which is the traumatic effect of an expulsion or push out.

Expulsions and push outs send the message that there is something wrong with the children (as opposed to understanding their adaptive responses), when in actuality there is something wrong with the system. Early educational systems must be changed and become more understanding and sensitive of what these children have experienced. Currently, we are allowing these systems to perpetuate harmful practices that disproportionately affect Black boys and frame them as problematic instead of being full of potential.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

"Preschool expulsions: Parental experiences of Black boys who were left behind"

I, _______________________________________, state that I am over 18 years of age and that I voluntarily agree to participate in a research project conducted by Tasha Henneman, MPA, MA, Educational Leadership Doctoral Program in Early Childhood student at Mills College.

The research is being conducted in order to gain an understanding of the experience of parents; their children and families who have a preschool-aged child that was expelled from a child care setting.

The specific tasks I will perform require me to participate in a 3-week (once weekly) focus group at BANANAS in Oakland, a one-on-one interview, an instructed letter and other writing exercises, and possible serve on a panel of parents to educate others of my experiences.

I acknowledge that Tasha Henneman has explained the task to me fully; has informed me that I may withdrawal from participation at any time without prejudice or penalty; has offered to answer any questions that I might have regarding the research procedure; has assured me that any information that I give will be used for research purposes only and will be kept confidential. In order to ensure that information from this research will be kept confidential, all audiotapes and their transcriptions will be locked in a file cabinet in the researchers home. Additionally, all hand written notes will be transferred electronically before getting thrown away. I understand that any use of the

audio tape or video that result from my participation in this study will not be used for purposes that are not directly related to research venues, such as presentation in meetings or conferences open to the public or press, without my further written consent. I understand that individuals associated with this research may request now or at some time in the future an extension of the permissions for the use of this information that I consent here.

I also acknowledge that the benefits derived from, or rewards given for, my participation have been fully explained to me-as well as alternative methods, if available, for earning these rewards-and that I have been promised, upon completion of the research task, a brief description of the role my specific performance plays in the project. I understand that I may contact Tasha Henneman at (510) 504-0836 and/or her advisor, Dr. Linda Kroll, Educational Leadership at Mills College, (510) 430-3161, if I have questions about this study at a time following my participation.

________________________________	________________________________
(Signature of Researcher)	(Signature of Participant)
________________________________	________________________________
(Date Signed)	(Date Signed)

Appendix B

Parent Interview Protocol

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your child—what is something you really love about him? What do you find challenging about him?
2. Can you tell me about your process in selecting the child care program that you chose? What were some the deciding factors in that process? How many child-care/preschool settings has your child attended?
3. Can you tell me about the events, as you understand them, that led to your child's expulsion?
4. How did you feel when you were told that your child had to leave the preschool program? What was the first thing you felt and/or thought about when you were told? Tell me about your child's feelings.
5. What impact did the expulsion have on your family? Can you tell me how other family members responded?
6. How were you informed about your child's behavior? What was your conversation with the preschool caregivers/teachers like?
7. What, if any, were some of the techniques used to assess or remedy your child's behavior before the expulsion?
8. What support services, if any, have you accessed since the expulsion? Did you feel or get any forms of support?
9. Is there anything you wish you had done differently in response to finding out your child was going to be expelled before, during or after the expulsion?

10. If you knew that another parent was going through the same situation with their preschool child, who was on the verge of expulsion, what advice would you give that parent?
11. What were the ethnicities of the teachers in the child care program?
12. How did the teachers relate to your child before his expulsion?

Appendix C

Center Director Interview Protocol

1. Can you tell me a little bit about how you came into this field/work?
2. What behaviors in children do you find most challenging? And your staff? Which have led to an expulsion? How many have you had to make?
3. In thinking about the expulsions you have had to make, is there any circumstance/situation that stands out more then another? Can you tell me about the events, as you understand them, that led to a child's expulsion?
4. How did you feel when you had to expel a child? Was it particularly different when it was a Black boy? What was the racial makeup of the children that were expelled?
5. What impact did the expulsion have the families of the children? Can you tell me how they responded?
6. What are parent teacher conferences like?
7. What, if any, were some of the techniques used to assess or remedy a child's behavior before the expulsion?
8. What support services, if any, do you have access to? Did you get any forms of support?
9. Is there anything you wish you had done differently in response to child was expelling a child?
10. What do you or your staff need?
11. If another center director was in a situation where she/he thought a child was going to have to be expelled, what advice would you give her or him?

Appendix D

Focus Group Protocol

Agenda

I. Introduction

a. Myself, research purposes

b. Participants

c. Ground rules for focus group

d. Icebreaker: Please describe your child using only one word.

II. **Questions for Focus Group Discussion (1-2hours)**:

a. What are some of your child's strengths?

b. What are some challenges you face with your child's behavior?

c. Have people ever commented on your child's behavior? If so, what have they said to about his behavior?

d. How did you feel when you were told that your preschooler was going to be expelled? Can you tell me what that process was like?

e. What, if anything, did you do in response to the preschool or director of the program expelling your child? What did you find most challenging about the process?

f. More questions to be determined after first gathering.

III. **Letter writing (20-30 minutes):**

The letters written in this activity will not be forwarded to the preschool programs, although the participants are at liberty to do whatever they wish with

the finished letter. Participants will be asked to write a letter to the directors of their former preschool program.

Instructions: Write a letter to the director of your child's former preschool. In the first paragraph explain your current understanding of your child's expulsion, including how you understand the facts. In another paragraph of the letter, describe how you felt as a result of the expulsion. Conclude with a paragraph describing how you are meeting your family's need for preschool and how that is working out. Lastly, spend some time to write any additional comments that you would like to express.

IV. Ground Rules for Focus Group

1. To be as open as possible but will respect and honor the right of privacy.
2. All information shared in the group will remain confidential. What's discussed here stays here.
3. Respect differences: don't discount the ideas of others.
4. Be supportive rather than judgmental.
5. All emotions welcome.
6. If you need a break for any reason please feel free to voice that and or just excuse yourself.
7. Statements may be retracted or asked to be off record and will not be included in research findings.

Any others? (Formulated by participants).

Appendix E

Letters Parents Wrote to Preschool Directors

Tiffany

As a result of my son not being of importance to your staff and this school, for him to be put out due to his behavior and color is unjust and downright dishonorable. The situation doesn't make me upset, but only proves how much segregation still very strongly exists. I chose a school with African-American staff thinking they would understand the nature of my son and know how to nurture and work with him. Instead that blew up in his face and shamed him. How dare you use my son's natural behavior against him and put him in out of getting his education. The age range of 0-5 is a time very critical for a child's growth and development. For "this program" to put him out is out of character. This state funded program targets urban, low-income families of color, so is this what all-young Black boys and their families look forward to? I have, and so are many others. There will be a stop put to this modern Jim Crow segregation slaying on young Black children.

My son was expelled due to how energetic he was. He did all the work asked of him; it's just his "behavior," and his attention span that they couldn't deal with. He is very, very, very energetic and joyful. The staff were two elder adult women who had a very small space and lots of toddlers whom they wanted structured too stringent for their age. As a result of the expulsion, my nerves were bad from fear of my son being labeled so different. He was not happy that he had to leave his friends or his educational institute.

Due to the stigma that had been put on my child and also my concern that his behavior might hold him back from getting a "normal" education, he began attending a therapeutic preschool for children who had emotional and behavioral issues. T his was okay for a brief moment, until I noticed there were children who had severe behavioral issues my son didn't possess or had never seen before. He eventually began to progress with worsened behavior than he came in with. My heart dropped. I felt hopeless and unsupported. My son began to bring home abnormal and new learned behavior that I didn't allow and would have to wean him out of. He didn't stay for a year because his behavior was making him uncomfortable and it hurt to see what my son was going through. I unenrolled him in order to let him calm down for kindergarten.

Although unenrolling my son from a therapeutic preschool he still struggled with learning new calming behaviors for attention. He still remembers his first school and mentions his times there. I am thinking about home school now because he is hyper but the classes are oversized and one teacher. Kids aren't able to be kids and learn through play. I'm not happy that my income, race and urban status classifies my son and others for a life of detriment if not caught early. More needs to be done about this and hopefully this is just the beginning. T hank you

Melissa

Dear "Mr. George,"

I'm writing to let you know the impact that our departure from "Townsville" had on our family. This event has been the most traumatic we have experienced so far. I feel as if I wasn't given fair honest feedback and the school preferred to avoid the issues rather than communicate and work together with me to try to resolve the challenges. The

bits of advice I was given was only after much persistence and was delivered with little thoughtfulness and relevancy from his teachers. I feel as if your entire organization was more concerned with school perceptions outwardly than with the wellbeing of my three year old.

My understanding of the situation is that my son, while not formally expelled, was pushed out of your school. In speaking with three separate teachers in addition to yourself, it was made clear that my son was not "a good fit," my son was clearly positioned outside the regular students. This labeling and segregation during activities, sleeping time and through disciplinary tactics where he alone was called out on the board every day for his behavior, created an unproductive and confidence destroying environment for my son. During this key time of self-confidence building, your school chose to punish and isolate my son rather than teach. Moreover you offered me no helpful information to attempt to improve the challenges. Throughout all of this, I was given very little information about those challenges except for him being generally uncooperative and aggressively negotiating and no specific incidences were ever cited.

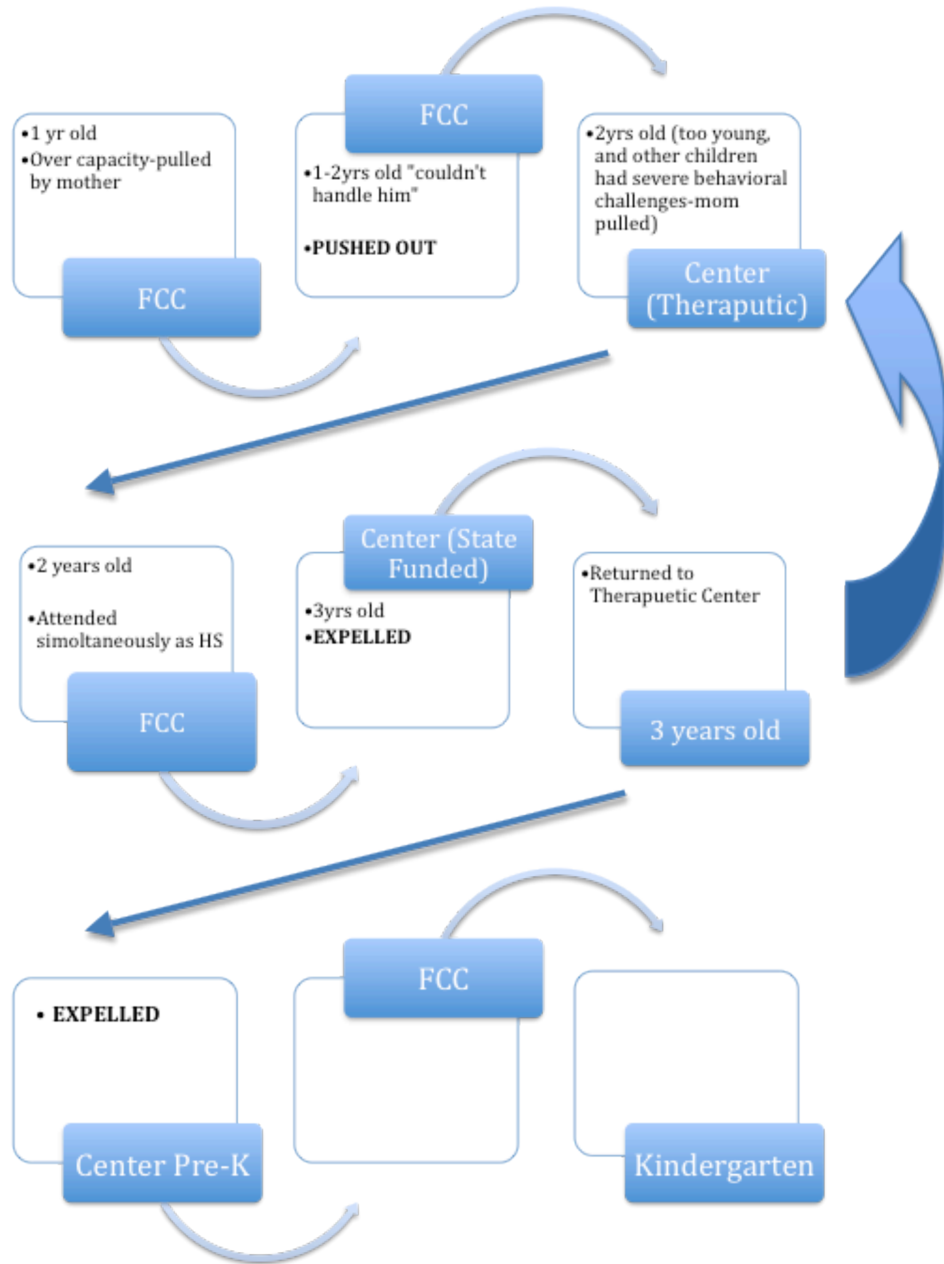
Now my son goes to a play based small mixed age preschool where he thrived after some time of regaining much of the confidence he lost at "Townsville." Talking with this teacher nearly every day, we worked together to identify areas that needed improvement and determine specific, non-punitive tactics that we could use consistently at home and school. The difference of helping him learn how to interact as opposed to "calling him out" in front of his classmates for his behavior has created an environment he loves and thrives in. Also the willingness of his teacher to try multiple approaches to see what would resonate best with my son was key. We all recognize that there is more

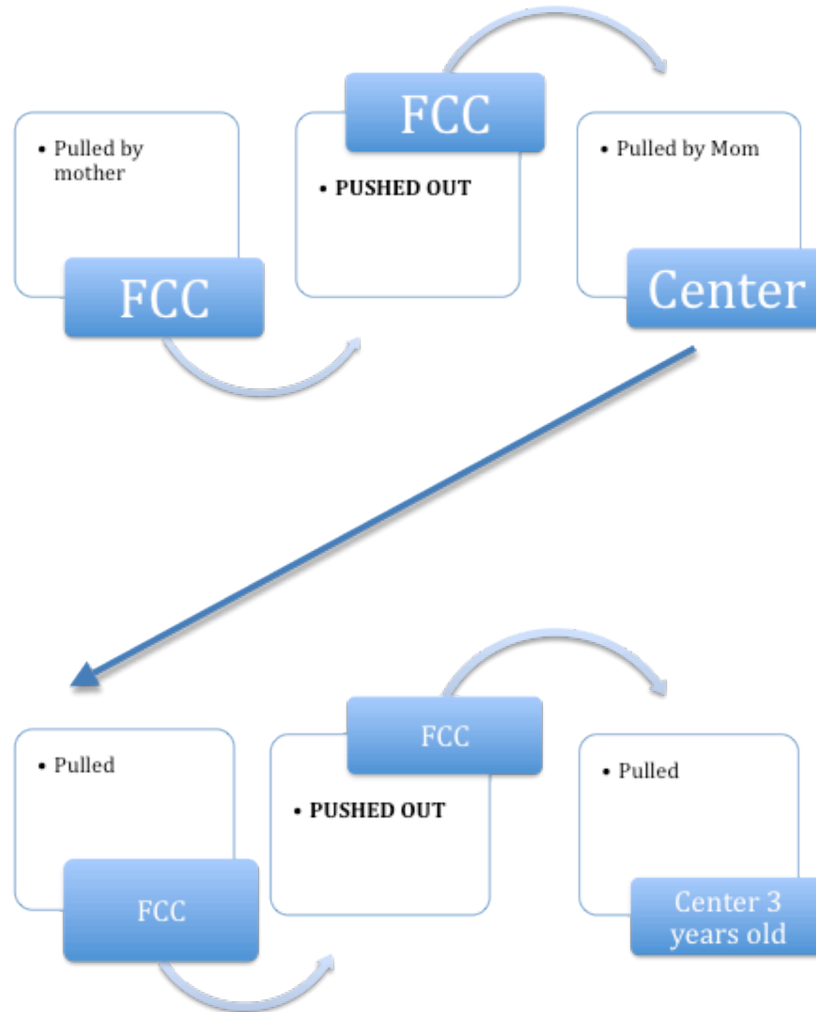
learning needed for us all and that will always be ongoing. We also recognize and respect the "busy boys" of the world and allow them the room they need to thrive as individuals.

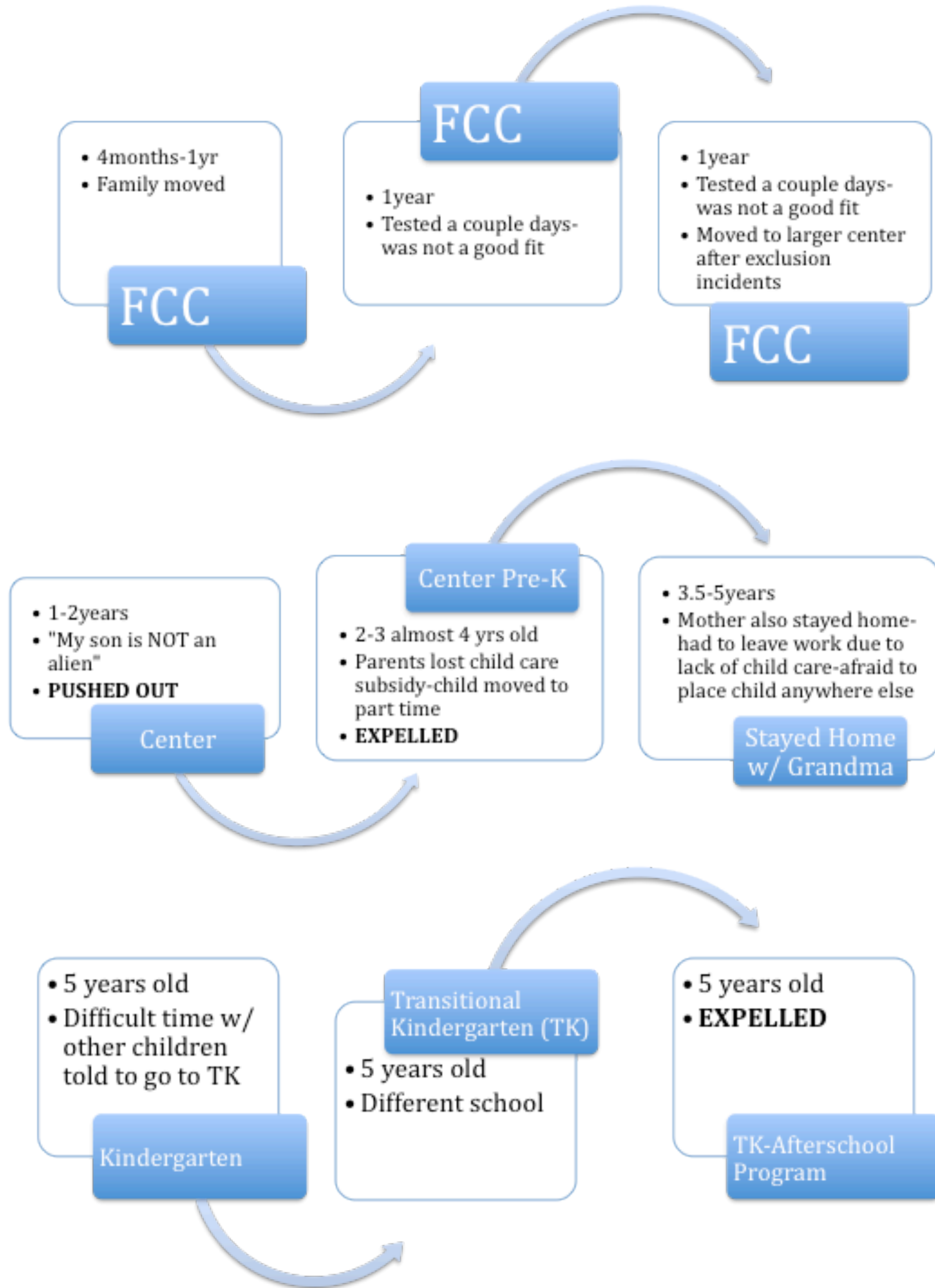
My sincere hope is that you hold on to the basic understanding that your responsibility is to educate behavior, or otherwise removing a student from that process who is under you supervision is highly destructive. Please respect the individuals who you have in your care for so many hours. Don't force them to fit your model. Help them become more knowledgeable and powerful versions of themselves.

Appendix F

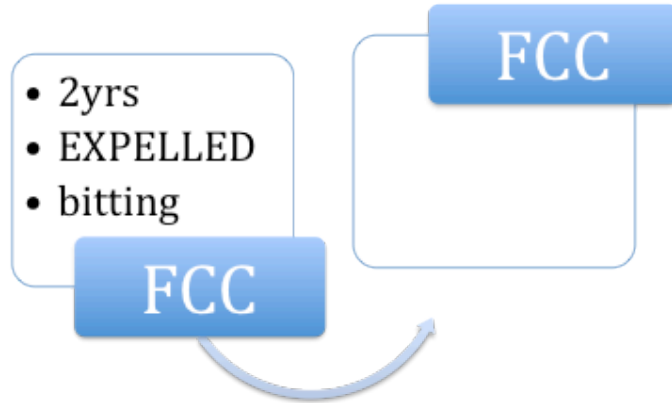
Child Care Pathway Charts of Children 1-6

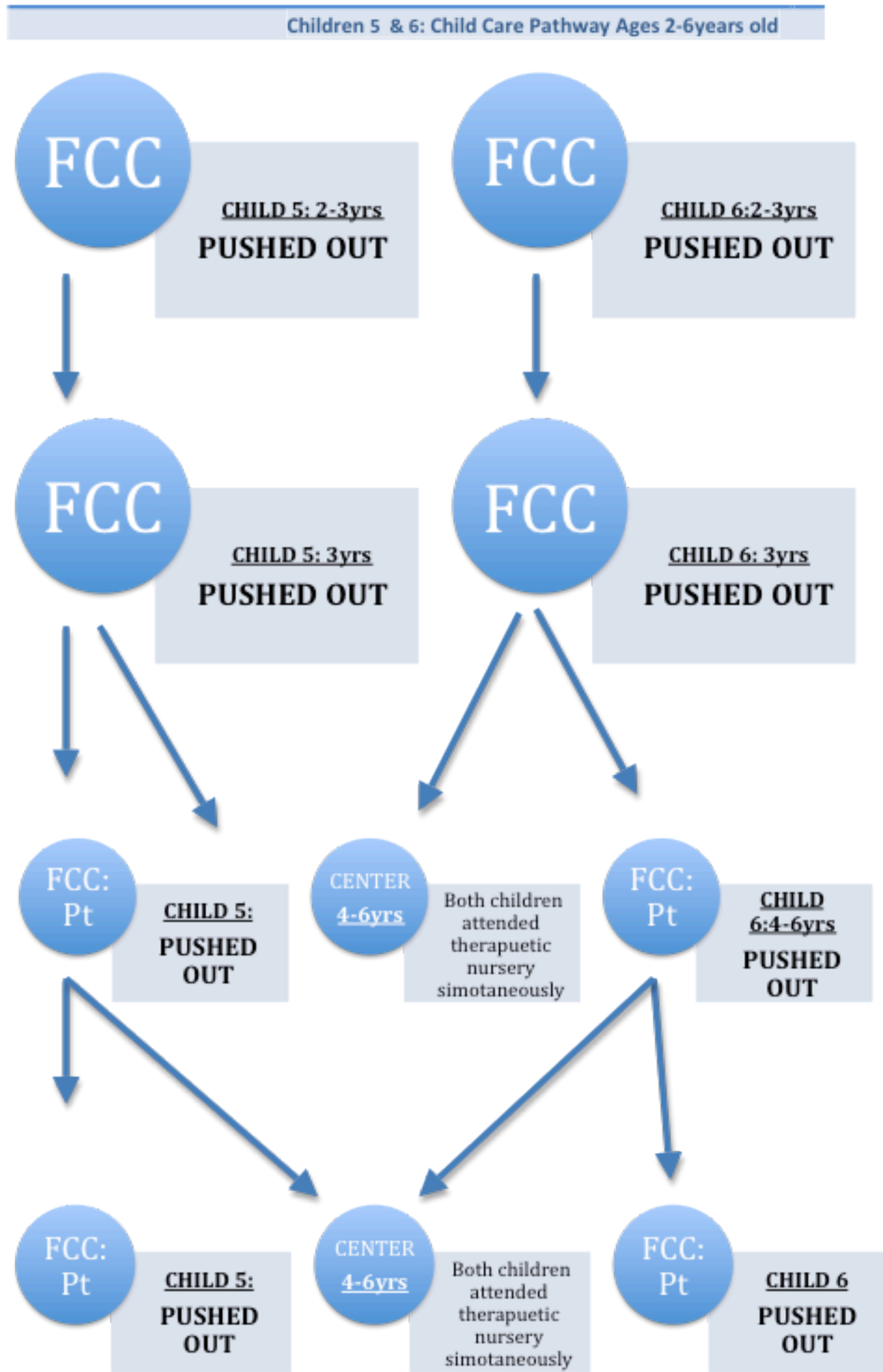

Child 1: Child Care Pathway 1
FCC
•1 yr old
•Over capacity-pulled by mother
FCC
•1-2yrs old "couldn't handle him"
•PUSHED OUT
Center (Theraputic)
•2yrs old (too young, and other children had severe behavioral challenges-mom pulled)
FCC
•2 years old
•Attended simoltaneously as HS
Center (State Funded)
•3yrs old
•EXPELLED
3 years old
•Returned to Therapuetic Center
Center Pre-K
• EXPELLED
FCC
Kindergarten


Child 2: Child Care Pathway 1
Pulled by mother
FCC
FCC
PUSHED OUT
Pulled by Mom
Center
Pulled
FCC
FCC
PUSHED OUT
Pulled
Center 3 years old



Child 3 age 4months-5years: Child Care Pathway 1
FCC
4months-1yr
Family moved
FCC
1year
Tested a couple days-was not a good fit
FCC
1year
Tested a couple days-was not a good fit
Moved to larger center after exclusion incidents
Center
1-2years
"My son is NOT an alien"
PUSHED OUT
Center Pre-K
2-3 almost 4 yrs old
Parents lost child care subsidy-child moved to part time
EXPELLED
Stayed Home w/ Grandma
3.5-5years
Mother also stayed home-had to leave work due to lack of child care-afraid to place child anywhere else
Kindergarten
5 years old
Difficult time w/ other children told to go to TK
Transitional Kindergarten (TK)
5 years old
Different school
TK-Afterschool Program
5 years old
EXPELLED


Child 4: Child Care Pathway
1
2yrs
EXPELLED
bitting
FCC
FCC


Children 5 & 6: Child Care Pathway Ages 2-6years old
FCC
CHILD 5: 2-3yrs
PUSHED OUT
FCC
CHILD 6:2-3yrs
PUSHED OUT
FCC
CHILD 5: 3yrs
PUSHED OUT
FCC
CHILD 6: 3yrs
PUSHED OUT
FCC: Pt
CHILD 5:
PUSHED OUT
CENTER
4-6yrs
Both children attended therapuetic nursery simotaneously
FCC: Pt
CHILD 6:4-6yrs
PUSHED OUT
FCC: Pt
CHILD 5:
PUSHED OUT
CENTER
4-6yrs
Both children attended therapuetic nursery simotaneously
FCC: Pt
CHILD 6
PUSHED OUT