

## Division of Child Care Services Suspension and Expulsion Policy

All families in South Dakota should have access to child care environments that support their child's growth and development. The Division of Child Care Services (CCS) has developed a policy to limit expulsion and suspension practices in child care settings by providing access to supports that enable early childhood programs to meet the individual needs of children and families.

The terms expulsion and suspension in this policy refer to a program removing a child from activities that include other children; removing a child from a program temporarily; expulsion that dismisses a child from the program permanently; and soft expulsions which are practices that encourage families to remove a child or voluntarily discontinuing services.

Social-emotional development, the cornerstone of a child's health and well-being, is nurtured through positive experiences. Expulsion and suspension practices can hinder a child's development and learning and are associated with negative educational and life outcomes.

Therefore, CCS, along with the Early Childhood Enrichment (ECE) Programs, will provide guidance towards the limitation or prevention of suspension and expulsion practices in early childhood programs. It is an expectation that child care providers seek training, technical assistance, and support to determine a positive approach that allows a child with challenging behaviors to remain in care, or if necessary, move on to a more appropriate setting.

Licensed and registered programs are strongly encouraged to establish policies that eliminate or severely limit expulsion, suspension, or other exclusionary discipline practices. Once policies and procedures are established, licensed programs should clearly communicate them with all staff and families. Clear communication will enable program administrators, teachers, and other staff to be consistent in their implementation of prevention and intervention strategies and will ensure that all staff share the same information and operate with the same set of assumptions.

Assistance is available to child care programs statewide through regional ECE programs, located in Aberdeen, Brookings, Pierre, Rapid City and Sioux Falls. Contact information for the ECE programs can be found at: <http://dss.sd.gov/childcare/educationalopportunities/sites.aspx>.