

KEEPING KIDS IN CLASS

SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND TEACHERS

MAY 9, 2018
EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL

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Federal Guidance on Suspension and Expulsions

In 2014, Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education issued a joint Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings.

- Raise awareness
- Guidance on disciplinary policies free of bias and discrimination
- Using data to guide goal setting to reduce/eliminate exclusionary discipline practices
- Invest in workforce training
- Promote the use of evidence-based practices that prevent the use of exclusionary discipline practices



KEEPING KIDS IN CLASS

PRE-K THROUGH 2ND GRADE SUSPENSIONS
IN TEXAS AND A BETTER WAY FORWARD



March 2018

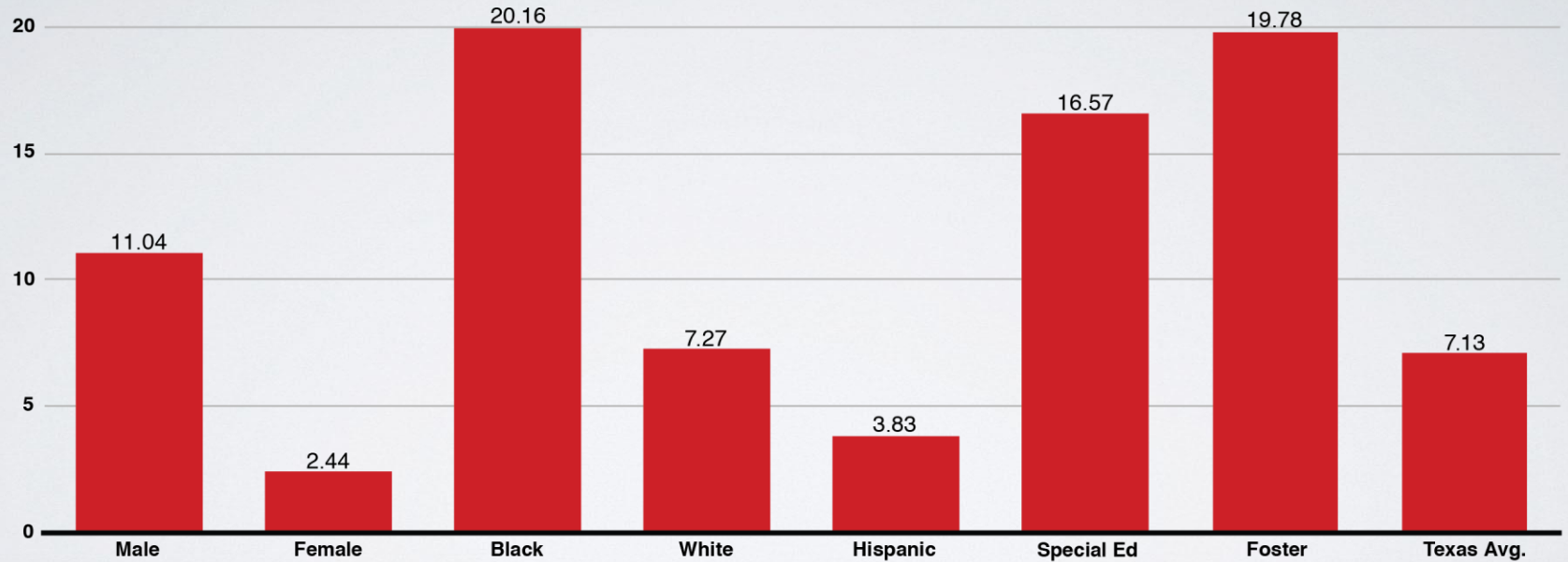
Why Young Students Are Suspended

- Age appropriate behavior
- Unmet basic needs
- Mental, behavioral, or developmental disorders
- Trauma and toxic stress
- Classroom settings and practices
- Teacher stress and depression
- Implicit bias

State Policies That May Contribute

- ECI funding and Medicaid reimbursement rates
- Child care deserts
- Pre-k funding, class size, and teacher-child ratio
- Little to no support for school mental health
- Special education benchmark

Rate of Suspensions Per 100 Pre-k through 2nd Grade Students Show Disproportionate Punishment, 2015-2016



What Works?

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Restorative Discipline
- Access to coaches, ECMHC, and behavior specialists
- School Counselors
- Training and TA from ESCs (include early childhood providers)
- Collect and analyze data to address disparities

Policies in Early Childhood Settings

Head Start

- In 2016, the federal Office of Head Start new policy on restricting the use of suspensions due to a child's behavior.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

- In 2017, a new requirement for child care centers' written operational policies to include a policy on suspensions and expulsions.



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Health and Wellness



Taking Care of Ourselves Addressing Our Own Wellness

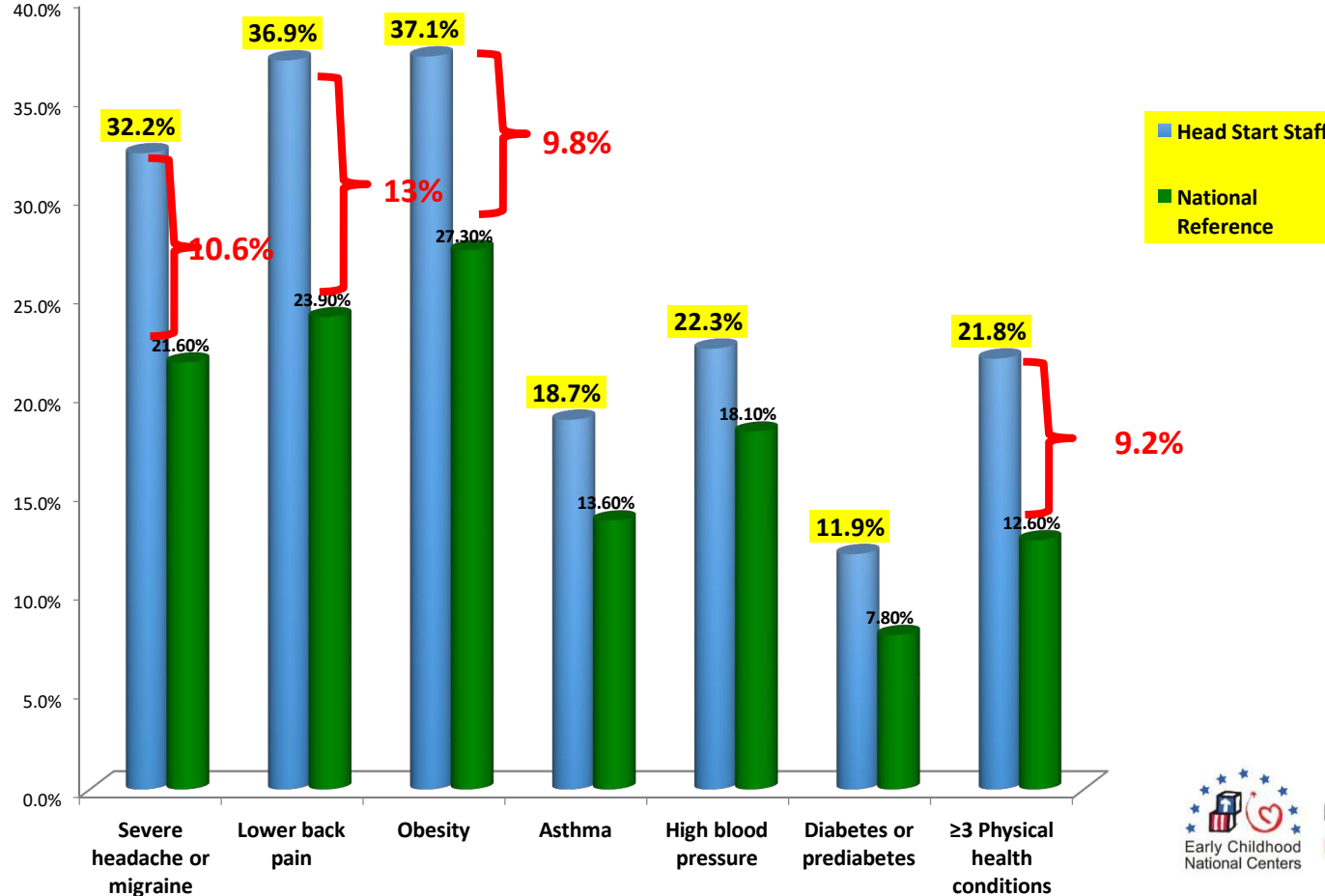
Region V1 2017 Mental Health Institute ***Supporting Wellness For Staff, Children, And Families***

Sunyoung Ahn, PhD., Georgetown University

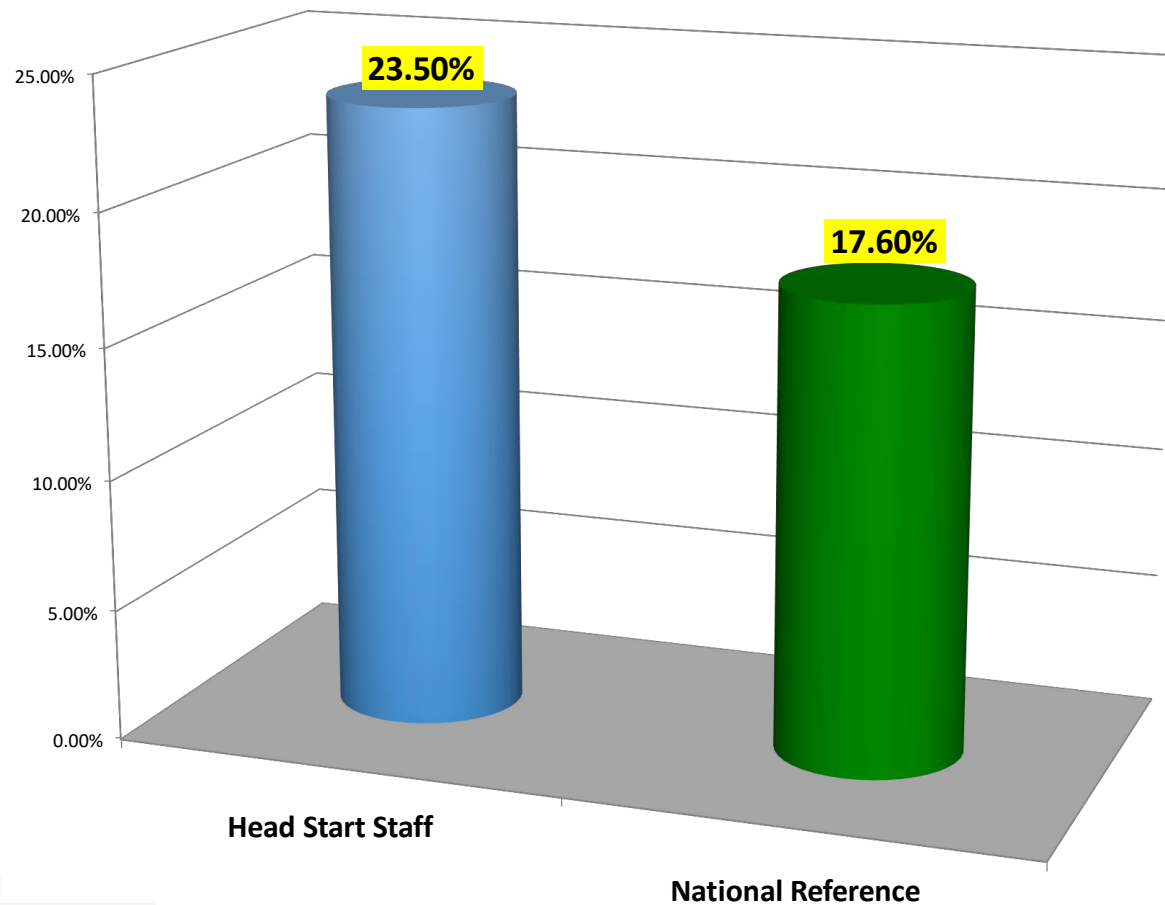
Amy Hunter, LICSW, Georgetown University

January 25, 2017

Table 2. Prevalence of Health Indicators Among Pennsylvania Head Start Staff Survey Participants (N = 2,122) in 2012 and a National Reference Population in 2011: PHYSICAL HEALTH



MENTAL HEALTH Depression diagnosed by health professional



Why should we focus on wellness support for Early Childhood Staff?

- Providing care to young children is an intense and demanding job.
- Parents and teachers are under pressure to meet the demands of running a household/classroom, personal concerns, and responding to the child/children in their care.
- Stress is natural and can be inevitable, but stress can take a toll on your health and effectiveness as a parent or provider.
- Stress doesn't just effect you, it also impacts the child/children in your care.

Why?

Research shows that:

- Caregivers who are stressed find it more difficult to offer praise, nurturance and the structure that young children need.
- Caregivers who are stressed are more likely to use harsh discipline.
- Children whose caregivers are under high stress tend to have more challenging behavior

Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

- What is it?
- Why do we need it?
- What is the model?

What is Mental Health Consultation?

- ▶ Collaborative approach
 - ▶ Includes: teachers, center staff, parents, and children
- ▶ Build staff and parent skills around:
 - ▶ Identifying, addressing and reducing the impact of mental health problems in young children
- ▶ Why consultation, not therapy?
 - ▶ Building capacity increases the number of children impacted, and over time as well

Why Mental Health Consultation?

- ▶ Suspension and expulsion rates for children under 5 are very high
- ▶ Suspension and expulsion in early years is associated with additional risk factors
- ▶ Goals:
 - ▶ Reduce suspensions and expulsions
 - ▶ Reduce challenging behaviors
 - ▶ Increase staff/parent knowledge and ability to intervene effectively

Pyramid model for promoting social-emotional development



Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: vanderbilt.edu/csefel
Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children: challengingbehavior.org

What is the model?

- ▶ Center support: staff wellness, communication, support
- ▶ Coaching for teachers
 - ▶ Behavioral interventions
 - ▶ Social/emotional learning
 - ▶ Classroom interventions/changes
- ▶ Trainings for staff and parents
- ▶ Coaching for parents

- ▶ Effectiveness:
 - ▶ Decreases behavioral problems
 - ▶ Decreases aggressive behaviors
 - ▶ Improves social skills
 - ▶ Decreases expulsions and suspensions

Recommendations

- Involve community partners in addressing the wellness of early childhood staff
- Support training or technical assistance for early childhood staff
- Support efforts to increase the number of Mental Health Consultants and the number of centers served
- Share any opportunities (grants, learning communities, etc.) and share resources among the groups/members