

FOCUS

on
Early Childhood
Mental Health

helping children soar



PROJECT LAUNCH

**Pennsylvania
Project LAUNCH
Partnership**

717-213-3730
brafox@berksiu.org

Factsheet #78, 7/16

What is Positive Behavior Support?

Recently the US Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education released a joint policy statement on Expulsion and Suspension in Early Childhood settings. This policy statement highlighted that young children are removed from preschool settings at high rates and that this practice can negatively impact their educational and life outcomes. The policy statement also highlighted several recommendations to promote social emotional development in young children while preventing the need for expulsion or suspension practices; Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) was one of those recommendations.

What we know:

- In high-quality early childhood programs, most children will respond to the teacher's use of social skills instruction, redirection, and prevention strategies (e.g., environmental arrangement, catching children being good, etc.).
- PBIS does not aim to "fix" a child, but to make adjustments in the environment, while focusing on improving a child's skills.
- PBIS uses a tiered approach to providing universal supports to **ALL** children to promote wellness, targeted social emotional strategies to those who need more support, and intensive services to those who need them.
- The PAPBS Network is ensuring on-going access to state-level training and data resources as well as the opportunity to be publicly recognized for high quality implementation of program-wide PBIS. Currently there are 100 ECE programs implementing PW-PBIS in PA with the support of the network.

What we can do:

- Build relationships through bonding with and nurturing a child which helps them to feel good about themselves and that they can succeed in their environment.
- Teach new skills when the child is not engaging in challenging behavior (the time when a child is having a tantrum is not a teachable moment).
- Give positive responses and acknowledgement for a desired behavior and avoid responding when that behavior is not occurring (when at all possible).
- Seek adult learning opportunities on social-emotional development, responding to challenging behaviors, and the implementation of PW-PBIS.

Resources

- **Related FOCUS on ECMH factsheets: "Positive Reinforcement"**
- US Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education: "Policy Statement on Expulsion and suspension policies in early childhood settings", https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/expulsion_suspension_final.pdf
- Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), WWB #10: Positive Behavior Support- An individualized approach for addressing challenging behaviors; http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/what_works.html
- Fox, L., Jack, S., & Broyles, L. (2005). Program-Wide Positive Behavior Support: Supporting Young Children's Social-Emotional Development and Addressing Challenging Behavior. Tampa, Florida: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/resources/documents/sek_cap_booklet.pdf
- Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support Network: www.papbs.org

This document was developed under grant number SM061548 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.

