

Arizona Suspension & Expulsion Prevention Policy



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

What is Suspension & Expulsion Prevention?



- The Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant, which provides states and tribal nations with child care funding, requires states to enact policy and provisions to reduce suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings, and promote children's social-emotional and behavioral health.

Why Do We Focus on Preventing Suspension & Expulsion?



- A child's early years set the trajectory for the relationships and successes they will experience for the rest of their lives, making it crucial that children's earliest experiences truly foster – and never harm – their development.
- High-quality early childhood programs provide the positive experiences that nurture positive learning and development.

How is Arizona Preventing Suspension & Expulsion?



The DES Division of Child Care (DCC) is committed to ensuring all Early Childhood and Education Professionals have the training and education necessary to prevent suspension and expulsion.

This is achieved by providing child care professionals with access to the knowledge, skills, and support they need to help children experience positive social and emotional development — the foundation for all learning, future relationships, and school readiness.

What is Arizona's Suspension & Expulsion Policy?



Arizona's Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Policy is in effect for all DES-contracted providers.

Highlights:

- Foundations 1 Training for all child care providers and staff
- Access to Technical Assistance support at the first signs of need for help
- Interaction and collaboration with AZ STEPS Resource Consultants & Mental Health Consultants to prevent suspension or expulsion

Where Are We Headed?



- Immediate improvements for children, families and providers through the expansion of training and technical assistance.
- Enhanced data collection and analysis to determine gaps and opportunities.
- Incentives for providers that want to do more to reduce suspension & expulsion and improve practice.
- Address system gaps, enhance support for staff, and strengthen family and community services.

Policy Compliance

- Providers are required to comply with the Policy Requirements through the Provider Registration Agreement.
- A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) may be put in place to identify measures that will eliminate future non-compliance action.
- Failure to address compliance issues through the CAP process can include:
 - Additional training requirements.
 - Placing the provider on hold until the requirement is met.
 - Notification of failure to comply.
 - Contract termination for failure to comply.

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NEW

AZ STEPS Foundations 1 Requirement

Foundations Training & Technical Assistance Support

Arizona **S**tatewide **T**raining and Technical Assistance for **E**xpulsion **P**revention (AZSTEPS)

- **The AZ STEPS *Moving Forward with Expulsion Prevention (Foundations 1)* training is required for all staff to complete within 90 days of hire.**
- This requirement is applicable to all staff (as defined in the CCA Child Care Provider Registration Agreement).
- Registration available through:

[Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry](#)

 azregistry.org

 info@thearizonaregistry.org



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Foundations Training & Technical Assistance Support

- All child care staff who have taken Foundations 1 training are encouraged to:
 - Submit a Technical Assistance (TA) Request to AZ STEPS through the trainer; and
 - Register for and attend training provided through the Expulsion Prevention training series.
- Registration available through:

[Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry](#)

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Requirements & Procedures for Providers and AZ STEPS Resource Consultants

Provider Requirements



- Include suspension and expulsion prevention language in the provider's internal policy and procedures.
 - [Sample Child Care Provider Expulsion Prevention Policy](#)

WHY?

- Informs the parent/guardian during the child care enrollment process.
- Encourages collaboration up-front.

Provider Requirements

Examples of all the documents mentioned in this presentation will be available at the end of the [Suspension and Expulsion Prevention policy](#). Visit the [Provider Resources page](#) to obtain the documents.

- Obtain a completed About Me Questionnaire (CCA-1200A) signed by each parent/guardian.
- Provide AZ STEPS Preschool Suspension and Expulsion Support for Families Flyer (CCA-1275A) to parents/guardians upon enrollment.
- Collaborate with the parent/guardian to promote the child's development, identify and address any physical, cognitive, speech, social/emotional, or behavioral health needs that may arise in the child care setting.

Provider Requirements

- Participate in a collaboration meeting and develop an Action Plan, if deemed necessary by the AZ STEPS Resource Consultant.
- Continue collaboration with all parties listed in the Expulsion Prevention policy.
- Maintain communication with the parent/guardian and AZ STEPS Resource Consultant
 - Identify and communicate positive outcomes, roadblocks, and collaborate to problem solve how to move forward to best support child's education, health and development.

Provider Requirements

- Communicate any changes and new strategies with the child's parent/guardian.
- Schedule a follow up collaboration meeting to discuss progress and to determine any other changes in order to maintain the child's enrollment at the current child care setting.
- Collaborate and maintain frequent and open communication with all parties listed in the Policy.

The Resource Consultant Role

The AZ STEPS Resource Consultants are here to help providers and families!

- Identifies behavioral challenges to determine what will be most effective and appropriate to support the provider and maintain the child in the current child care setting.
- In the unique event expulsion is warranted, the Resource Consultant coordinates with the parent/guardian to find a new provider and help transition the child, with support from CCR&R.
- Assists the provider in maintaining the child in their care temporarily by providing support services with little to no interruption in services.
- Advises the parent/guardian to contact the assigned DCC Eligibility Specialist.

Opportunities to Prevent Suspension or Expulsion

Opportunities for Preventing Expulsion

- Develop and clearly communicate preventive guidance and discipline practices.
- Develop and clearly communicate suspension and expulsion prevention policies.
- Ensure that the early childhood workforce is adequately trained, supported, and prepared to help all children excel.
- Strengthen family partnerships and provide children and families with social-emotional and behavioral support.
- Set goals to assess progress.

Child Care Providers can help limit and eliminate early expulsion and suspension!

Opportunities for Preventing Expulsion

Develop and clearly communicate preventive guidance and discipline practices that provide specific guidance on what teachers and programs will do when presented with challenging behaviors, including:

- specific teacher and staff responses
- communication with families and caregivers
- consulting with mental health specialists and the child's medical home

A Sample Policy is provided by DES/DCC to support the creation of an internal policy and procedure:

[Child Care Provider Expulsion Prevention Policy CCA-1277A](#)

Support for Teachers - Preventing Expulsion

Help is available to support you and your classroom!



If interested in TA, please contact AZSTEPS@swhd.org or speak with your trainer today!

- All child care staff who have taken Foundations 1 training are encouraged to submit a Technical Assistance (TA) Request to AZ STEPS.
- The TA provider will work with you at your workplace to develop strategies to support relationships in the classroom.
- Collaborate with the director/owner, child's parents/guardians and AZ Steps Resource Consultants to develop an Action Plan.

Support for Teachers - Preventing Expulsion

Help is available to support you and your classroom!



- Did you know there is an entire Expulsion Prevention training series available to you? Visit: [🌐 swhd.org/expulsion/](https://swhd.org/expulsion/)
- The Birth to Five Helpline is a free service open to all Arizona families and professionals working with young children. Bilingual (English/Spanish) early childhood specialists are on duty M-F 8am to 8pm, or text the Helpline 24 hours a day, seven days a week: 877-705-5437

Suspension or Expulsion Decision

Suspension or Expulsion Decision

Best Practice Tip

Exclusionary discipline measures should be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.

Even in extraordinary cases, the provider and AZ STEPS can assist the child and family in accessing services and an alternative placement.

Suspension or Expulsion Decision - Provider Role

After all resources and support mechanisms have been implemented and the provider's decision is to expel the child, providers must:

- Complete an Arizona Notification of Suspension and Expulsion form through CCR&R.
- Notify the parent/guardian in writing, at least five business days prior to the child's disenrollment.
- Maintain a copy of the written notice of the expulsion in the child's file

How to Submit: Suspension and Expulsion Support Request

Complete an Arizona Suspension and Expulsion Support Request form by completing it through the State's Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) by either:

- Calling 1-800-308-9000 Option 2; or
- Visiting the CCR&R website at azccrr.com (request is on homepage)



Immediate Cause for Suspension or Expulsion Decision



Early suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary discipline practices have long-term consequences for children, their families, and the schools that they will later attend.

Suspending or expelling the child without waiting the otherwise required five (5) business day period, or before alternate child care arrangements are secured, may only occur in the following unusual circumstances:

- a. An incident occurs that could cause a serious injury or death to the child, staff members, or other children in care.
- b. The parent/guardian has failed to pay the required DES co-payments or additional fees.

Immediate Cause for Suspension or Expulsion Decision



Early suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary discipline practices have long-term consequences for children, their families, and the schools that they will later attend.

The Provider shall:

- a. Notify the parent in writing immediately of the cause for immediate suspension and/or expulsion.
- b. Complete a Notification of Child Care Expulsion within two business days of suspending or expelling a child.

Resources and Policy Exhibits

Opportunities for Preventing Expulsion



Child care providers are strongly encouraged to establish clear policies that eliminate or severely limit expulsion, suspension, or other exclusionary discipline.

A Sample Policy is provided by DES/CCA to support the creation of an internal policy and procedure:

[Child Care Provider Expulsion Prevention Policy CCA-1277A](#)

Training and Technical Assistance Support

Training and Technical Assistance through AZ STEPS can help provide the skills and support needed to prevent suspension and expulsion, by focusing on:

- Promoting children's social-emotional and behavioral health and appropriately addressing challenging behavior.
- Forming strong, supportive, nurturing relationships with children and families.
- Collaborating with community-based service providers, and connecting children, families, and staff to additional services and supports as needed.
- Having a strong understanding of culture and diversity and using strategies to prevent and correct implicit and explicit biases.
- Promoting emotional health and well-being of providers and teachers.

Training and Technical Assistance Support

REQUIREMENT: All staff are required to complete *AZ STEPS Foundations 1* training within 90 days of hire date.

- **Register for courses** in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry at azregistry.org
 - **Search** under “My Training Event” under Course Title: “Foundations”
 - Other Training in the Expulsion Prevention series - search by: “Expulsion” or Sponsor Name: Southwest Human Development-Training
- Helpful links:
 - [Create a Registry Account video](#)
 - [Find Training Events in the Registry video](#)
 - [Using the Registry How-to Guides](#)

Training and Technical Assistance Support

- All staff are encouraged to submit a Technical Assistance request upon completion of Foundations I training to support the transfer of learning.
- Technical Assistance can be requested after completing Foundations 1 training - DO NOT WAIT until the situation reaches the point of needing to submit a Suspension and Expulsion Support Request!



If interested in TA, please speak with your trainer or contact Southwest Human Development today!

Policy Exhibit Web Links

You can find the following documents on the [Provider Resources page](#) under the "Highlights and Key Updates" tab:

- Sample Child Care Provider Expulsion Prevention Policy CCA-1277A
- About Me Questionnaire CCA-1200A
- Preschool Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Support for Families CCA-1275A
- Action Plan CCA-1276A
- Service Consent Form CCA-1271A

Thank you!

**For questions related to the Expulsion Prevention program at DES/CCA, contact:
ccaprogramdevelopmentunit@azdes.gov**

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