

Dear Parents,

We are pleased to share with you information on the expulsion prevention initiatives that DES Child Care Administration (CCA) has recently been focusing on. Early Childhood professionals all have a common goal, it is for all children that we serve to be happy, healthy and ready for school. CCA is committed to supporting teachers in the work they do by funding statewide community based trainings that provide them with ideas on how to manage difficult behaviors (like hitting, biting, throwing things) that often occur in child care classrooms. Our goal is to have centers not suspend or expel children for these behaviors, but to learn new strategies and mechanisms that support children and families through these challenging situations. This change in practice will best support ALL children in preparation for kindergarten. An example of content explored through our trainings covers helping children build social-emotional skills. What are social-emotional skills? Social skills are those skills that help us get along with others. Emotional skills are those that help us understand and name our own feelings and then express them in a way that doesn't hurt anyone.

Additional to the trainings, providers may receive technical assistance and support to further address the content received in the trainings. All children need to practice social and emotional skills. Those are hard skills for young children to learn. It takes a lot of practice and help from grown-ups! Sometimes children have behaviors (like hitting or kicking) that tell us they could benefit from extra practice. The technical assistance that teachers receive will support all of us in this practice. Resource Support Specialists from CCA are available to meet with providers and listen to concerns teachers (or families) might have or discuss problems that may have occurred that they need assistance and guidance with. They may make classroom observations and ask questions to learn how they can help. They may even join in classroom activities. The goal for the trainings, technical assistance and support visits is to offer teachers and families' new ideas for supporting all children. As always, individual work with your child will only take place with your knowledge and consent.

Parents will be given the opportunity to complete a Best of Care form about their child. The Best of Care Form is an opportunity for families to share with providers a child's specific likes, dislikes, sleep and comfort rituals, important people, etc. so that there is a bridge between home and child care and so that the child can be understood and cared for as a unique individual. This form should be treated as a "gift" from parents, with an appreciation for the trust they put in providers when they share the care of their child and when they share information about their child and family. Parents are encouraged to take their time to complete this form. Optimally, it is completed through a conversation between the parent and provider.

We welcome your questions about this partnership, and hope you will feel free to check in with us, to build our efforts to better assist you. Please feel free to contact us at any time at the Expulsion Prevention Support Line 602-542-2526, or through an email at [DESEExpulsionPrevention@azdes.gov](mailto:DESEExpulsionPrevention@azdes.gov).

Sincerely,

Child Care Administration/Expulsion Prevention Team