Understanding the Experiences of Suspension and Expulsion from Early Childhood Education Settings: ParentsÕ Perspectives

Wood, V. F., Meyer, L., & Northey, K.

INTRODUCTION

- * The State of Vermont (VT) received federal funding to improve their early childhood education (ECE) system.
- ¥ The ECE system in Vermont includes care and education for children ages 0 to 5.
- ¥ Families can access the ECE system through publicly funded pre-K, Head Start, and childcare centers.
- ¥ The stateÕs Child Development Division (CDD) decided to partner with researchers from the University of Vermont (UVM) to learn more about the strengths and challenges of accessing the ECE system in VT.
- ¥ Speci!cally, the CDD team wanted to know:
 - 1. How many young children (ages 0-6) with disabilities are being suspended or expelled from ECE settings?
 - 2. What supports are in place to help families of children with disabilities gain acce ss to and remain in their ECE settings?
 - 3. What are the barriers to including children with disabilities in ECE set tings?
 - 4. What r ecommendations are suggested to improve the ECE system in VT t o ensure inclusion and accessibility for children with disabilities?

METHODS

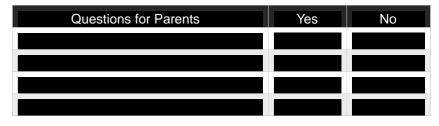
- ¥ The research team worked with CDD to complete this work in a 3-month period.
- ¥ Information was gathered from many sources, including VT state leaders, professionals in the !eld, and parents.
- ¥ This poster focuses on what was learned from parents of children with a disability that experienced suspension or expulsion from an ECE setting in VT.
- ¥ This work was determined to be quality improvement (QI) by the Internal Review Board of UVM.
- ¥ The authors share their !ndings from this project as an example of ways in which the experiences of those with lived experience of disability can be included in QI initiatives that bridge evaluation and policy advocacy.
- ¥ The researchers worked with CDD to create a recruitment "yer for parents inviting them to participate in a focus group.
- ¥ The "yer stated that the purpose of the research was to learn how CDD could better support families and young children with a disability in their ECE setting.
- ¥ The "yer was shared through social media outlets and targeted email listservs.
- ¥ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all focus groups were held virtually.
- ¥ Parents were given the choice to complete an electronic survey or to participate in the focus group.
- ¥ Parents were o # ered \$25 for their time if they participated in a focus group.
- ¥ Only four parents participated in a focus group, so they were interviewed individually.
- ¥ Sixteen parents completed the electronic survey.
- ¥ This poster focuses on what was learned from those that completed the electronic survey.

SAMPLE

- ¥ All 16 parents identi!ed as female. Fifteen were moms. One was a grandmother.
- ¥ Di# erent kinds of moms were represented in the sample. Nine (56.3%) were biological moms. Five (31.3%) were adoptive moms. One (6.3%) was a foster mom
- ¥ Fourteen (87.5%) identiled as White. One (6.3%) identiled as Asian. One (6.3%) identiled as Native American. All 16 parents identiled as non-Hispanic.
- \pm Ages ranged from 24 to 55, with a mean of 37.75 (SD = 6.97).

FINDINGS

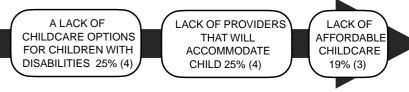
Answering Question 1: How many young children with disabilities are being suspended or expelled?



Answering Question 2: What supports are in place?

- ¥ In the survey, parents were asked to write in what supports they had access to in order to support their child in their ECE setting.
- ¥ The parent responses were categorized by the lead author based on similarity in content and theme, a process called open coding.
- ¥ Parent responses fell into the following categories:
 - ¥ Individualized Education Plans (IEP), 19%, 3
 - ¥ Case Management, 13%, 2
 - ¥ NONE, 50%, 8

Answering Question 3: What barriers are in the way?



Answering Question 4: What recommendations did parents make for improving the system?

