

**An Examination of the Parent-teacher Relationship as Universal Protection against
Preschool Expulsion**

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THESIS

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SUMMARY

Across the United States, rates of preschool expulsion exceed those in K-12 and relatively little is known of how to prevent such disciplinary decisions. Adding to the concerning rate in which children are being expelled, is that preschool expulsion disproportionately affects children of color, especially boys. The present study explores a potential protective strategy existent in all early childhood centers, the relationship formed between parents and teachers. Surveys and interviews with early childhood teachers and parents outline the association between the parent-teacher relationship and a child's risk for expulsion. Quantitative findings indicate that high-quality parent-teacher relationships are related to a lower risk for expulsion for children who have not been expelled, with the strongest association found for Black children. Interviews with teachers and parents of children who have been expelled provide rich detail about protective practices and styles of interactions between parents and teachers that can be used in future training programs and interventions.

Parent-teacher relationships that are characterized by communication, comfort, and agreement have long been espoused in early childhood education (Epstein, 2001; Knopf & Swick, 2007) as they are known to promote better social, behavioral, and academic outcomes for young children (Cox, 2005; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). Despite the potential benefits of a high-quality parent-teacher relationship, parents and teachers both report levels of dissatisfaction with their interactions (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2004). In addition, parents and teachers experience interpersonal and structural (school-level) barriers to forming the type of relationships known to benefit children. The failure to fully appreciate and invest in these relationships in the field of early childhood education may contribute to long-term negative outcomes for children and families (Herman & Reinke, 2017), such as the expulsion of children from preschool (which is occurring at alarming rates; U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Gilliam, 2005). In the search for interventions to curtail the preschool expulsion crisis (Gilliam, Maupin, & Reyes, 2016; Perry, Dunne, McFadden, & Campbell, 2008), one untapped factor is how the parent-teacher relationship may impact a child's risk for expulsion. The primary goal of this paper is to explore the protective qualities of the parent-teacher relationship for a child at-risk for expulsion so that this knowledge can be disseminated rapidly, ultimately benefiting both children's early learning experiences and teachers' workplace well-being. Specifically, this paper will present the findings of two studies in order to address the following research goals:

Quantitative Study: *To assess the association between teachers' perceptions of their relationship with a child's parent and a child's risk for expulsion, and whether this association is moderated by a child's previous expulsion history, race, and gender.*

Qualitative Study: *To identify and describe characteristics of protective parent-teacher relationships for children who have previously been expelled, identifying practices and styles of*

interactions which can be included in future interventions and training programs for early educators.

Expulsion in Preschool

The most severe disciplinary action that an education system can take in response to a child's behavior is expulsion. Expulsion, or the permanent removal of a child from a program or setting, occurs with surprising frequency in early childhood education settings. The first nationally representative survey of preschool discipline that included both private and public preschools indicated that 17,000 preschoolers were expelled in a given year (National Survey of Children's Health, 2016). Adding to the concerning rate in which children are being expelled, is that preschool expulsion disproportionately affects children of color, especially boys (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Black children only makeup 19% of preschool enrollment but comprise 47% of preschoolers suspended or expelled and are 3.6 times as likely to receive one or more suspensions relative to White preschoolers (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Research has shown that attending high-quality preschool programs significantly improves a child's academic and social-emotional school readiness (Child Trends, 2018). Critical to the early years of schooling, children begin to learn key social-emotional skills such as how to regulate their emotions and behavior, make good decisions, and engage in prosocial behaviors (Denham & Brown, 2010). These competencies are acquired through interactions with teachers, peers, and parents (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012). Acquiring age-appropriate competencies set children up for greater success in the realms of social and cognitive development, pre-academic achievement, school readiness, and adjustment (Denham & Brown, 2010); all factors which can contribute to school retention. When a child is expelled for social, behavioral, or emotional concerns, they are excluded from a preschool environment designed to promote these social-emotional competencies. In other words, expelling a child blocks them from the opportunities to practice the skills necessary for school readiness (e.g., sitting still,

expressing emotions, and sharing with others), denying them the positive benefits of early education. Prior research in elementary and secondary samples have shown how disruptive expulsion can be to a child's academic growth (Lamont et al., 2013), thus finding accessible prevention strategies is critical.

Especially among young children, expulsion impacts a child's perceptions of, and relationships with, non-parental caregivers. All children enrolled in early care and education programs not only benefit from enriching social and cognitive stimulation, but they also form attachment-like relationships with their teachers (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Pianta, Nimetz, & Bennett, 1997). A large body of research has demonstrated that inconsistency and disruption in these relationships are associated with poorer child outcomes (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). As children spend increasing time in early childhood settings, teachers take on a larger role as a child's socializer, providing children experiences that promote or deter the development of social-emotional skills (Denham, Bassett, & Zinsser, 2012). However, when a child is expelled, the teacher-child relationship critical to promoting these skills is disrupted and therefore so is the learning of these social-emotional competencies.

The potential detrimental effects of expulsion increases when considering the transition of care for the child. Children who are expelled may be forced to attend lower-quality care settings (Loeb, Bridges, Bassok, Fuller, & Rumberger, 2007), where staff have little knowledge or experience in supporting the social-emotional development of children or in working with children with severe emotional/behavioral challenges (Edlefsen and Baird, 1994; Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995; Hillemeier, Morgan, Farkas & Maczuga, 2013). With increasing pressure to decrease expulsion, high-quality centers may not want to admit a child that has been expelled, making it difficult for parents (and expelling centers) to transition an expelled

child into an appropriate setting.

As a result of expulsion, children can therefore be left without access to the education and intervention supports they critically need. Longitudinal studies of preschool expulsion are almost non-existent, but studies of elementary-aged children provide evidence that the negative effects of expulsion are long-lasting. Children who are expelled are more likely to follow negative developmental trajectories, such as academic failure, increased risk for unsafe behaviors, and are more likely to be in contact with the juvenile justice system (Brown, 2007; Lamont et al., 2013). As a result of federal level data revealing high rates of preschool expulsion and gender and racial disparities, scholars and policymakers are concerned that some children may be placed on the so-called '*school-to-prison pipeline*' (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005) before they have even begun formal schooling.

Ecological context of preschool expulsion. Faced with challenging behaviors in the classroom, preschool teachers often acknowledge the need for intervention but lack the appropriate resources to address the child behavior (Quesenberry, Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Hamann, 2014), resulting in a great source of teacher stress (Friedman-Krauss, Raver, Morris, & Jones, 2014). Teachers faced with children biting, throwing chairs, inconsolably screaming, or otherwise disrupting the classroom, are put in very difficult situations. Children enrolled in early education settings do not yet have the cognitive capacity to understand the consequences of their behavior let alone the regulatory skills to manage it. Without appropriate resources, teachers may use disciplinary strategies to address challenging behaviors such as ignoring the behavior, using time-outs, removing the child from the classroom, and eventually, removing the child from the center itself (Buck & Ambrosino, 2004; Quesenberry et al., 2014). Preschoolers are not the ones choosing to be expelled. A small but growing body of literature (e.g., Gilliam & Shahar, 2006;

Zinsser, Zulauf, Nair Das, & Silver, 2017) indicates that in early childhood, expulsion is the result of a series of adult decisions. Each expulsion of a preschool child is a product of an overburdened, underfunded, under-resourced, and fragmented early education system (Zinsser, Silver, Hussaini & Zulauf, 2019).

In order to successfully reduce the high rate in which preschoolers are being expelled, teachers and administrators need to be provided with additional resources, supports, or interventions that relieve or overcome the challenges facing the early childhood education system. Unfortunately, this is not always the approach that is currently being implemented. Since the 2014 Child Care Block grant, states across the country are complying with stipulations to curtail expulsion without clear guidance, recommendations, or additional funding. As a result, states have been left to search for their own viable options to prevent expulsion. At least 15 states have or are working towards passing legislation (Grossman-Kahn, Reyes, Maupin, & Gilliam, 2018) aimed at decreasing rates of expulsion, with each separate legislative effort varying with regards to the types of programs that regulations apply to (public Pre-K, publicly funded child care, etc.). One of the most progressive and potentially influential policies is Illinois Public Act 100-0105, which stipulates that in any of the nearly 11,000 state-licensed child care or early education programs (birth through age five) expulsion cannot be the first or only option explored. Instead, programs must exhaust all resources and supports before planning the transition of a child out of their care with a parent's consent (Illinois Register, 2019). This sweeping legislation will impact nearly every program in Illinois from public pre-kindergarten programs in elementary schools to home-based child care programs.

Though this groundbreaking legislative momentum is important and exciting, many of the laws aimed at decreasing expulsion have been passed quickly, do not provide additional

resources for teachers, and are not grounded in research (Grossman-Kahn, Reyes, Maupin, & Gilliam, 2018). Although legislative efforts are intended to curtail the high rates of preschool expulsion, from an ecological lens, unless teachers are supported in their efforts to retain all children, the impact of rules and stipulations around preschool expulsion may be muted and could result in unintended consequences. Consequences may include teachers treating children unfairly in the classroom, decreases in teacher well-being due to increasing demands to support children despite limited resources, increases in “soft” expulsions (i.e., children being sent home early, in-school suspensions), and/or centers not accepting children they may feel they would later wish to expel. Therefore, now is a crucial time to identify universal preventive strategies that can be implemented in all early childhood centers across the country. Relationships between parents and teachers exist in all centers, cost little to no money to invest in, and have been shown to promote positive outcomes for children. However, the association between the parent-teacher relationship and a child’s risk for expulsion has not been explored. Therefore, the present study moves us closer to identifying a strategy that could protect children from expulsion that is ubiquitous to all early childhood centers- the relationship between parents and teachers.

Parent-Teacher Relationships in Early Childhood

Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) ecological systems theory first outlined the potential developmental impact of connections and experiences across home and child care with Epstein (1995) later referring to it as “spheres of influence” in a child’s life. Specifically, through fostering overlap between home and school, teachers and parents can work together to promote better social, behavioral, and academic outcomes for children (Fan & Chen, 2001; Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, & Childs, 2004; Cox, 2005; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Epstein, 2001; Barnard, 2004; Lawson, 2003). Especially in early childhood, parent-teacher agreement and

collaboration supports child development across contexts (i.e., home and school; Lang, Shoppe-Sullivan, & Jeon, 2017). A parent's sharing of information about a child's home-life (e.g., a child's sleep patterns, the arrival of a new sibling, a parent's absence) or individual characteristics (e.g., fears and worries, interests, soothing techniques) may help a teacher understand, predict, and sympathize with a child's behavior. Similarly, when teachers share classroom activities, tendencies, and challenges, and when parents are involved in their child's early education, both sides can work together to benefit the child's social-emotional development. For example, Churchill (2003) found that when parents and teachers agreed or had stronger "goodness-of-fit" on expectations for children's behavior and parenting practices, preschool children had higher social competence. Although the value of parent-teacher relationships in early childhood is well-known (Birch & Ladd, 1998; Epstein, 2001; Knopf & Swick, 2007), the potential role of these relationships in enabling a teacher to work with a child who is displaying challenging behavior, and therefore at risk for expulsion, has not yet been explored.

Teachers' perceptions of parents and their relationship with parents. How a teacher perceives the parent-teacher relationship, and their perception of a child's parent, can affect a child's development and well-being. Studies have shown that preschool teachers' perceptions of parents are positively associated with children's later academic and social success (Herman & Reinke, 2017). Furthermore, preschool children whose parents are more involved are seen by teachers as displaying fewer problem behaviors (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). In Head Start samples, when parents and teachers have more positive relationships, teachers report less conflict with the child (Serpell & Mashburn, 2012). If a teacher has a positive perception of a child's parent it may increase the amount of time the teacher spends with the child in the

classroom, improve the quality of interactions between the teacher and the child, and reduce the likelihood that the teacher labels the child as having behavioral problems (Serpell & Mashburn, 2012). In contrast, if a teacher has a negative perception of a child's parents, they may perceive the child behavior as problematic, endorse greater feelings of hopelessness that child behavior may change, and therefore may be more likely to recommend expulsion (Gilliam et al., 2016; Zulauf & Zinsser, 2019). Taken together, teachers' interactions with and perceptions of parents may contribute to how teachers perceive children in their classroom, and thus their utilization of discipline (i.e., expulsions and suspensions).

Negative perceptions held by a teacher about a child's parent may have implications for that child's classroom experiences. Unfortunately, teachers' perceptions of parents are subject to the same discriminatory tendencies as the larger society including racism and classism. Teachers are more likely to view parents' involvement negatively when parents are from low income and/or from racial or ethnic minority groups (Hauser-Cram, Sirin, & Stipek, 2003; Nzinga-Johnson et al., 2009). A teacher's perception of parents may be a result of differing beliefs about child-rearing practices, communication, and expectations regarding children's behavior (Churchill, 2003). These differences may result in a non-existent or strained parent-teacher relationship (Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007), marked by low levels of cooperation and trust (Boethel, 2003). Parents who are viewed negatively by teachers may receive differential treatment from both the teacher and center, such as less frequent and meaningful communication and less cooperation and partnership for helping a child persist in a classroom (Lott, 2001). As a result, children and parents who may need the most positive attention and support to engage them in education are the ones who are likely to be viewed least favorably by teachers (Downer & Myers, 2010; Hill, 2001).

In our prior work, we found that early childhood teachers' requests for expulsions were related to their perceptions of parents (Zulauf & Zinsser, 2019). Specifically, preschool teachers who had requested an expulsion in the past year endorsed more negative perceptions of parents in general, such as parents undermining their recommendations for children and finding it difficult to get parents to agree on how to deal with child behavioral concerns, compared to teachers who had not requested an expulsion. Themes around styles of engagement with parents also differed by teacher expulsion history. Teachers who had previously expelled a child attributed children's challenging behavior to parental characteristics more frequently and in greater detail than teachers who had not requested an expulsion. These teachers described a range of parental characteristics and saw these attributes as barriers to their own ability to handle or change the child's behavior in the classroom. This study seeks to extend our prior work by directly linking teacher-parent relationship quality to a child's risk for expulsion. Second, knowing that the relationship between teachers and parents is bidirectional, we seek to capture the voices of parents, something often missing from the literature on preschool expulsion.

Child Race and Implicit Bias

Expulsion is not the result of child behavior, but rather the teacher's interpretation of the behavior and their perceived ability to change it. Due to the disproportionate rate in which Black boys are being expelled from preschool (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), recent work has explored the possible role teacher implicit bias may play in a teacher's perception of child behavior and therefore utilization of discipline. Although there is less research examining this phenomenon in early childhood, studies of school-aged children have identified concerning trends. Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015) demonstrated that teachers view problem behavior by Black children as more "troubling" and are more likely to recommend severe punishment as

compared to the same behavior described among White children. Teachers' potential association between child race and the perceived threat of aggression has been shown towards Black boys as young as five years of age (Todd, Thiem, & Neel, 2016). This tendency to view child behavior differently based on the race of the child may be a manifestation of more generalized implicit biases regarding race and behavior (Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004).

Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti & Shic (2016) demonstrated that early childhood education staff tended to watch Black children, especially boys, more closely when instructed to identify challenging behaviors during video observations, despite the fact that there were no challenging behavior displayed by any child. This suggests that preschool teachers may hold differential expectations of challenging behaviors based on the race of the child. Additionally, the authors found that providing preschool teachers with family background information resulted in lower severity ratings of child behavior when teacher and child race matched, and higher severity ratings when teacher-child race did not match (Gilliam et al., 2016). These results indicate that a teacher knowing information about a child's parents may differential impact their perception of the child's behavior depending on whether or not their race matches the child. Taken together, this body of work suggests that teachers may hold biases against Black children and their families. These biases may impact the quality of relationships formed between teachers, children, and families, which may place Black children at an increased risk of harsh discipline in preschool.

Purpose of the Current Paper

With pressure mounting to curtail the preschool expulsion crisis, state and local governments, center administrators, and teachers are in need of viable prevention and intervention strategies to implement across all sectors of the early childhood education field.

Most previously identified effective prevention strategies require substantial funding and/or restructuring (e.g., increasing access to mental health consultation services, reducing teacher-child ratios and class sizes; Gilliam, Maupin, and Reyes, 2016; Phillips, Mekos, Scarr, McCartney, & Abbott-Shim, 2001; Carlson et al., 2012). Without increased funding for such reforms, programs are searching for ways to support teachers in their retention and inclusion of all children by leveraging resources to which they already have access. The primary goal of this paper is to explore the possible protective role of a ubiquitous feature of all early childhood programs –relationships between parents and teachers. This paper will present findings from two substudies, a quantitative and a qualitative study. The quantitative study will explore the associations among teachers’ perceptions of their relationships with children’s parents and preschool expulsion risk, which likely vary by children’s disciplinary histories, race, and gender. The qualitative study will use interviews with teachers and parents to identify and fully describe the characteristics of protective parent-teacher relationships preventing future expulsion, identifying practices and styles of interaction which can be included in interventions and training programs for early educators.

Previous research has shown indirect associations among teachers’ perceptions of parents and their tendency to request expulsions (Gilliam et al., 2016; Zulauf & Zinsler, 2019). However, to our knowledge, no study has directly explored if the parent-teacher relationship is related to a child’s risk for expulsion. Therefore, the purpose of the first study is to test the association between a teacher’s perception of their relationship with a child’s parent and that child’s risk for expulsion and whether this association is moderated by a child’s previous expulsion history, race, and gender. We hypothesize that a teacher-rated high-quality parent-teacher relationship (high agreement, support, endorsement, and low undermining) is negatively

associated with a child's risk for expulsion. Further, the prior literature indicates that teachers' perceptions are not independent of children's disciplinary history and/or teacher implicit biases. Thus, we hypothesize that a low-quality parent-teacher relationship (marked by high undermining, low agreement, unsupportiveness, and low endorsement) would be a stronger positive predictor of expulsion risk for children who are Black, boys, and have previously been expelled.

Once the contributions of the parent-teacher relationship are quantitatively understood, our second study will identify and describe the characteristics of protective parent-teacher relationships preventing expulsion via qualitative interviews with parents and teachers. We will utilize teachers' perceptions of and experiences with parents of children who have previously been expelled (and are therefore at an increased risk for subsequent harsh discipline, Christle et al., 2005), to provide a window into understanding how teachers do or do not proactively engage parents in ensuring a child continues to be retained in a classroom. Further, because these caregiver relationships are transactional, we will also interview parents of children who have been previously expelled, something often missing from the current dialogue about preschool expulsion (Gilliam, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). By speaking with these parents, we will be able to triangulate their data with those of teachers, leading to the greater validity of conclusions. Interviews with parents and teachers will provide additional knowledge of the protective qualities of the parent-teacher relationship that cannot be captured in structured questionnaires and surveys.

Quantitative Study

The quantitative study was designed to test whether a teacher's perception of their parent-teacher relationship was associated with a child's risk for expulsion, and to examine if this association was moderated by a child's previous expulsion history, gender, and race.

Method

Recruitment procedure. Data for this study are drawn from a larger study conducted with early childhood lead teachers in a large midwestern city about the parent-teacher relationship in early childhood, the experience of expulsion, and legislative efforts around expulsion. We recruited early childhood lead teachers to complete an online survey through professional network listservs, twitter and Facebook postings, or forwarded information from a colleague/peer. Eligible teachers were enrolled in the study online via Qualtrics.

Survey measures component A. *Teacher demographics.* Teachers reported on their age, race/ethnicity, education, and current center type (independent private center-based care, franchise/corporate center-based care, parochial or other faith-based programs, nonprofit center-based care, Head Start, public school, home-based care and other).

Child risk status and teacher confidence. Teachers indicated if they believed any child under their current care had been 'asked to leave a previous preschool or child care program due to behavioral concerns?' Teachers who responded positively to this proceeded to Component B of the survey. Teachers who did not believe they had a child in their current classroom that had previously been expelled skipped to Component C of the survey.

Child risk status was defined as "non-risk" whether the teacher indicated that they did not believe the child was previously expelled and "at-risk" if the teacher believed the child had been expelled. For at-risk children, teachers ranked how confident they were that the child was

previously expelled on a scale from “not at all confident” (0) to “positive” (4). Teachers were asked to explain, in free response format, how they knew (or suspected) that the child was previously expelled.

Survey measures component B. During Component B, teachers filled out all questions and measures at least twice. Once for each at-risk child and their parents and again for a non-risk child and their parents. The non-risk child was identified by prompting the teacher to pick a child in their classroom whose gender and race matched the at-risk child. In order to control for order effects, teachers were randomly assigned to the order in which they filled out the measures, with approximately half filling out the information for the non-risk child first and then the at-risk child, and the other half filling out the measures for the at-risk child first and then the non-risk child.

Child demographics. Teachers filled out demographics about the child (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, gender) and the child’s parents (e.g., race, family structure). Teachers were able to indicate more than one racial and ethnic background for a child (i.e., mixed race, Hispanic, Black). For our analysis, whether or not the teacher indicated that the child identified as Black was used to compare children by race (i.e., Black versus non-Black).

Teacher perception of the parent-teacher relationship. Teachers completed the cocaring relationship questionnaire (CRQ; Lang, Schoppe-Sullivan & Jeon, 2017) measuring the teacher’s perceived relationship with a child’s parent. The CRQ consists of 25 Likert-style items following a four-factor structure: Agreement, Support, Endorsement, and Undermining. Each item is rated on a Likert-type scale from 0 to 6 (0= “not true of us”, 2= “a little bit true of us”, 4= “somewhat true of us”, and 6= “very true of us”). A high-quality relationship is evident by high agreement, support, and endorsement, and low undermining. Agreement (4 items; $\alpha=.81$) is evidence of

teachers and parents having similar beliefs, goals and/or practices with regard to caring for a child (e.g., “This parent and I have the same goals for his/her child”, “Communication with this parent is open and easy”). Support (11 items; $\alpha=.91$) is defined as endorsement, encouraging, trust, and/or comfort from parent to teacher or vice-versa, including implementing the others advice with regards to child-rearing practices (e.g., “We often discuss the best way to meet his/her child’s needs”, “This parent makes me feel like I’m the best possible teacher for his/her child”). Endorsement (5 items; $\alpha=.87$) is described as one’s confidence in and affirmative attitude toward the other’s role (e.g., “I believe this child’s parent is a good parent”, “This parent doesn’t like to be bothered by his/her child”). The fourth factor, Undermining (5 items; $\alpha=.86$) is defined as evidence of the teacher feeling unsupported, criticized, unwelcomed or distrusted in the role of caregiver (e.g., “This parent does not trust my abilities as a teacher”, “When this parent picks up or drops off, I feel uncomfortable or tense in his/her presence”).

Early exploration of the measure has shown predictive validity between several factors of the CRQ and parental school involvement. Specifically, support and undermining have been shown to be associated with parent-reported school involvement, whereas, support and agreement have been shown to correlate with teacher-reported parental involvement (see Lang, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Jeon, 2017).

Preschool expulsion risk (PERM). The preschool expulsion risk measure (PERM; Gilliam & Reyes, 2018) is a measure created to estimate the likelihood that a program would consider expelling the child. Therefore, items on the PERM were developed without explicitly using terms relating to disciplinary sanctions (e.g., expulsions, suspensions, or removal of a child). Teachers rated each child on 12-items on a five-point Likert scale in the direction 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The PERM yields four factors each consisting of three

items: classroom disruption, fear of accountability, hopelessness, and teacher stress. Factors predicting preschool expulsion may include a teacher's perception of the child's behaviors in terms of the degree to which a child's behaviors (Factor 1) creates classroom disruptions (e.g., "This child's classroom behaviors interfere with my ability to teach effectively") and/or (Factor 2) poses a risk of injury for which the teacher might be accountable (e.g., "Other parents complain about this child's classroom behaviors"). Furthermore, preschool expulsions may be related to more global issues of the degree to which these behaviors may lead the teacher to (Factor 3) feel hopeless that anything can be done to improve the behaviors (e.g., "This child's classroom behaviors are not likely to improve significantly") and/or (Factor 4) experience increased teacher stress (e.g., "My job is more stressful because of this child's behaviors"). The PERM has demonstrated good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha for each factor ranging from .79 to .95 (Gilliam & Reyes, 2018).

Survey measures component C. Teachers who did not identify an at-risk child in their current classroom were prompted to think about the child in their classroom whose first name came first in the alphabet. These teachers then proceeded to fill out child demographics, their perception of the parent-teacher relationship for the non-risk child's parents (CRQ), and that child's preschool expulsion risk (PERM).

Survey Participants

Survey participants were 295 Early Childhood Education lead teachers who were currently working with children between the ages of 2-5 years old in a large midwestern city and the Metro area. One hundred and fifteen teachers who started the survey were dropped from this analysis because they did not fill out a significant portion (majority filled out less than 5%) of the survey and did not complete the survey components about at-risk or non-risk children and their

parents (survey Components B and C). Our resulting sample of teachers were mostly female (67%), mostly White (75%), and had several years of experience ($M = 7.3$ years, $SD = 2.8$). Additional participant demographic data can be found in Table 1. Of note, we refer to all teacher participants as “teachers” in both studies although some participants may self-label as “child care providers” (especially those who work in home-based centers).

Quantitative Analysis Procedure

We planned a mixed sequential analysis of data. First, we examined the data and found no evidence for outliers or assumption violations. Only two children (0.004%) were missing data on their gender, the remaining child-level data was complete (i.e., CRQ, PERM, race/ethnicity). Second, descriptive analyses were conducted to refine our understanding of teachers’ perceptions of the parent-teacher relationship (CRQ) and child expulsion risk (PERM). Next, to assess the association between a teacher’s perception of their relationship with a parent and a child’s risk for expulsion, and whether these associations were moderated by a child’s previous expulsion history, race, and gender, we fitted our data to a series of mixed effects logit models. Due to the fact that teachers may have rated two or more children, our model accounted for the fixed effects of our predictors while allowing random intercepts for each teacher. In each model, first we tested whether the inclusion of a different range of fixed effects contributed to the model’s goodness-of-fit. As fixed factors, we considered Race (categorical, 2 levels: Black versus non-Black), Gender (categorical, 2 levels: boy versus girl) and Risk Status (categorical, 2 levels: at-risk versus non-risk). The inclusion of a fixed main effect or interaction was evaluated on the basis of likelihood ratio tests, with the final model including only effects which significantly increased the model’s goodness-of-fit (Gelman & Hill, 2006). Satterthwaite’s approximations for

degrees of freedom were used to evaluate significance (Satterthwaite, 1946; Hox, Moerbeek, & Van de Schoot, 2017).

Results

Demographics of children. Teachers (N=295) reported on their perceptions of and relationships with a total of 434 children and their parents. One-hundred and five teachers (36%) indicated having at least one at-risk child in their current classroom, with 38 (13%) of those teachers indicating having two at-risk children.

At-risk children. Of the 143 at-risk children, 28.7% were identified as Black, 61% boys, and they had a mean age of 3.65 years. Teachers reported that most children (66.5%) resided in two-parent families; of the remaining households, teachers identified that 9% of at-risk children's parents were single (never married), 9% divorced, 14% not living together, and 2% other (e.g., lives with grandparents; parent incarcerated).

Teacher confidence in child's risk status. For each at-risk child, teachers were asked to rate their confidence that the child was expelled. Overall, teachers were confident ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 0.72$) that these children had been expelled. Thirty-six teachers (12%) provided open ended responses regarding where their confidence came from. Responses included a coworker, center administrator or prior center telling them (n=19), parents sharing this information (n=5), or teachers perceiving that the child was expelled based on comments the child had made or the child's behavior in the classroom (n=7).

Non-risk children. Data was also collected for 291 non-risk children, 25.7% were identified as Black, 72% boys, and they had a mean age of 3.7 years. Teachers reported that most children (89.4%) resided in two-parent families; of the remaining households, teachers

reported that 8.6% of the parents were single (never married), and 2% other (e.g., parents not living together, lives with grandparents).

Descriptive statistics of measures. Means, standard deviations, and ranges of teachers' perceptions of the parent-teacher relationship and child expulsion risk for both the overall sample and by child expulsion history and race are shown in Table 2. Pearson correlations between all modeled variables are shown in Table 3. Overall, the CRQ total and most individual factors of the CRQ were negatively correlated with the PERM. However, the CRQ factor of endorsement was positively related to PERM total and each individual PERM factor. We also found that the CRQ factor of support was not significantly correlated with two PERM factors: Classroom Disruption or Fear of Accountability.

Next, we ran a series of one-way ANOVAs comparing CRQ and PERM scores by child risk status, race, and gender. **Risk status.** Teachers' perceptions of their relationship with at-risk children's parents were significantly lower in quality ($M = 54.88$, $SD = 10.85$) compared to teachers' perceptions of their relationship with non-risk children's parents ($M = 65.16$, $SD = 14.80$), $F(1, 434) = 54.92$, $p < 0.001$. At-risk children were at significantly higher risk for being expelled again ($M = 43.94$, $SD = 6.75$) compared to non-risk children ($M = 32.72$, $SD = 12.44$), $F(1, 431) = 102.28$, $p < 0.001$.

Child race. Regardless of teacher race, teachers' perceptions of their relationship with Black children's parents were significantly higher in quality ($M = 66.30$, $SD = 11.85$) compared to non-Black children ($M = 60.15$, $SD = 14.95$), $F(1, 433) = 15.95$, $p < 0.001$. Black children did not significantly differ to non-Black children in their risk for expulsion, $F(1, 431) = 1.87$, $p = ns$.

Child gender. Teachers' perceptions of their relationship with parents, $F(1, 430) = 1.31$, $p = ns$, or child expulsion risk, $F(1, 428) = 2.485$, $p = ns$, did not differ by child gender.

Mixed-effects model selection. We estimated several models to understand the relationship between CRQ, child risk status, gender, race, and future expulsion risk. The base model examined the main effect of CRQ, gender, race, and risk status on PERM scores and found no significant main effect for gender. The second model examined whether gender interacted with CRQ to predict PERM scores, with risk status and race as main effects. This second model was found to be a worse fit for the data compared to the base model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 0.015$, $df = 1$, $p = .90$). As a result of the first two models and descriptive analysis described above, gender was dropped from the remaining models. We then compared a third model (main effect of CRQ, risk status, and race) to a fourth model (interaction of CRQ and risk status and main effect of race) and found that the fourth model was a better fitting model to our data compared to the third model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 46.07$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.01$). Lastly, comparing the fourth model to a fifth model (three-way interaction of CRQ, risk status, and race), we found that the fifth model was the best fitting model for this data set ($\Delta\chi^2 = 16.704$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.01$; AIC= 3002.3; BIC=3043.0; log-likelihood = -1491.2).

Three-way interaction of CRQ, child risk status, and race. The three-way interaction coefficient between CRQ, risk status, and race was significant, $t(111.72) = 2.77$, $p = 0.006$ (Figure 1; see Table 4 for analysis of variance results). For the at-risk group, the CRQ was not a significant predictor of PERM scores for both Black children, $t(105.33) = 0.71$, $p = 0.67$, and non-Black children, $t(122.25) = -0.58$, $p = 0.30$. However for the non-risk group, both Black, $t(106.85) = -8.37$, $p < 0.001$, and non-Black children, $t(357.91) = -3.91$, $p < 0.001$, showed a negative relationship between CRQ and PERM scores, suggesting that a parent-teacher relationship marked by high agreement, support, and endorsement, and low undermining relates to a lower risk for expulsion. Following up with a two-way interaction within the non-risk

group, the CRQ was significantly stronger in predicting PERM scores for Black children compared to non-Black children, $t(245.33) = -3.75, p < 0.001$. Our results indicate that for children who have not yet been expelled, especially Black children, a high-quality parent-teacher relationship is associated with a lower risk for expulsion.

Exploratory analysis. In order to understand how qualities of the parent-teacher relationship uniquely predict a child's risk for expulsion, exploratory analysis was conducted examining the CRQ factors individually rather than as a whole (agreement, support, endorsement, and undermining). Controlling for child risk status and race, we found that each CRQ factor uniquely predicted PERM scores. We found the strongest effects for undermining and agreement, with undermining positively predicting PERM scores, $t(426.37) = 11.37, p < 0.001$, and agreement negatively predicting PERM scores, $t(400.40) = -9.10, p < 0.001$. Support was also found to negatively predict PERM scores, $t(431.97) = -4.68, p < 0.001$. Contrary to expectations, but in line with our correlations, we found a positive association between endorsement and PERM scores, $t(314.07) = 4.52, p < 0.001$, suggesting that higher endorsement (a teacher's confidence in and affirmative attitude toward the parent; e.g., "This parent has a lot of patience for his/her child") of a child's parent is associated with a higher risk of expulsion.

Quantitative Study Discussion

We demonstrated a direct association between a teacher's perception of their parent-teacher relationship and a child's risk for expulsion. Specifically, for children who had not been expelled, a high-quality parent-teacher relationship was associated with a lower risk for expulsion, with this effect being strongest for Black children. However, for children who had previously been expelled, we found no quantitative association between the parent-teacher relationship and future expulsion risk.

Qualitative Study

We designed the qualitative study in order to identify and describe characteristics of protective parent-teacher relationships for children who have previously been expelled. By interviewing both parents and teachers, the qualitative study seeks to identify practices and styles of interactions which can be included in future interventions and training programs for early educators.

Method

Recruitment procedure. We recruited both lead teachers currently working with a child who had been expelled and parents of children who had been expelled from their child care arrangement to complete in-depth interviews. Initially we tried to recruit teachers interested in completing a phone interview about working with a child that had been expelled through the online survey completed in the quantitative study but this did not result in any eligible teachers (e.g., teachers were no longer interested, teachers did not respond to telephone calls or emails from the research team regarding the interviews). As a result, there is no overlap between participants in our two substudies. The resulting sample of parents and teachers were recruited through professional network listservs, twitter and Facebook postings, postings at local child advocacy centers, and targeted online media (i.e., neighborhood parent network). Parents and teachers were directed to fill out a screener in order to assess eligibility for interviews via Qualtrics.

Teacher and parent interviews. The first author conducted individual, in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews with parents and current teachers of children who had previously been expelled. Interviews ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. Interview questions focused on the process of expulsion, how to support child behavior in the classroom, and the parent-

teacher relationship. Specific questions about the parent-teacher relationship included: 1) What do you value in a parent-teacher relationship? 2) Describe your current relationship with this child's parents or your child's teacher? 3) What can a parent do to promote a relationship with a teacher? 4) What can a teacher do to promote a relationship with a parent? 5) How does the center promote parent-teacher relationships? Audio recordings of each interview were transcribed professionally and checked for accuracy by the first author.

Interview Participants

Teachers. Teacher interview participants were Early Childhood Education lead teachers who were currently working with a child between the ages of 2-5 years old who had previously been expelled. Sixty-one teachers accessed the screener and twelve meet eligibility criteria (lead teacher, currently working with a child between the ages of 2-5 who was previously expelled). Of those recruited for interviews, eight teachers responded to email and/or telephone invitations and completed the interview. Demographic data and descriptions of the participants who completed the interviews, center type, and information about the at-risk child discussed in the interviews can be found in Table 5.

Parents. Parents were eligible for an interview if they had a child between the ages of 2-5 years old who had previously been expelled from a child care arrangement. Ninety-one parents accessed the screener and fifteen meet eligibility criteria (child was currently between the ages of 2-5 and was previously expelled). Eight parents completed the interview. Demographic data and descriptions of the parents who completed the interviews and information about their child can be found in Table 5.

Qualitative Analysis Procedure

Parent and teacher interviews were analyzed in order to gain a deeper contextual understanding of the quantitative findings surrounding the parent-teacher relationship. Inductive thematic analysis was applied to the data as a means of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns from within the survey data; this methodology ensured that the themes were strongly linked to the data and not driven from a theoretical perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke's (2006) five stages of inductive thematic analysis was used: (1) becoming familiar with the data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) refining; and (5) defining and naming themes. Matrix displays for each participant and for each question were used to aid in data reduction, to facilitate interpretation, and to identify patterns within the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Throughout the process, analytic memos were devised to further develop analyses and interpretations of the data (Charmaz, 2003). Previous research has shown that parents and teachers may conceive of their relationships differently (Bernhard et al., 1988) therefore for this study we did not use dyadic data analysis (Lang, Tolbert, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Bonomi, 2016) but rather focused on themes that emerged between parents and teachers and where differences emerged as a potential site of interventions. The first author undertook all qualitative analysis, therefore there is no rater agreement to report.

Results

In our qualitative analysis of interviews with teachers and parents we sought to identify and describe characteristics of protective parent-teacher relationships for children who have previously been expelled, with an eye towards enriching our understanding of the quantitative study described above. Therefore the goal of this study is not to compare and contrast teachers' and parents' perceptions, but instead to identify commonalities that can be built upon in future

research and intervention development. Each of the qualitative themes will be described in detail below with illustrative quotations labeled with participants' anonymous ID numbers.

Previous parent-teacher relationship. At the start of the interview, parents, but not teachers, were asked to describe their child's expulsion, including how they perceived their relationship with their child's previous teacher. All but one parent (87.5%) discussed having a negative view of their previous parent-teacher relationship (child's teacher when they were expelled). Parents used words such as "non-existent" (P03), "contentious" (P06), "not honest" (P01), and "hectic" (P02) to describe their perception of the relationship. Parents discussed how it was hard to have a conversation with their child's previous teacher, feeling like the previous teacher was not working with their child, and perceiving that the previous teacher blamed them as a parent for their child's behavior; "Contentious. I mean I had to interface with her [previous teacher] sometimes so I would of course be very friendly and polite when I would drop him off, but I would be nervous that she was going to complain about something" (P06). Three parents (37.5%) described how prior to the child starting at their previous center or at the beginning of enrollment they perceived that their child's previous teacher was working with their child and that they were able to communicate. As one said:

We enrolled her at a local preschool. Came highly regarded. Everyone said wonderful things about it. Everything started off great. The [previous] teacher came to the house. She met with us. She met with our daughter. Everything was great. And then when she started, we started getting reports that this [child's behavior] is taking up too much of their time. That she [the child] wasn't participating in the circle or that the way they did the bathrooms. That was the really big thing. She kept having bathroom accidents. (P07)

These three parents also described how once their child's previous teacher perceived the child to be showing challenging behavior in the classroom the parent-teacher relationship and how the teacher interacted with the child was negatively impacted. For example, one parent discussed how once her child was perceived as being challenging to manage, the previous teacher told her that they could no longer support the child in the classroom:

So it didn't work out very well for my child or us. Basically we were told, "She knows the colors. She knows the letters. She's doing great with this and this and this, but she's just too much work. We really think that you should get her tested." So we did and it came back with that diagnosis [Autism Spectrum Disorder] and the teachers were like, "We can't help you." (P07)

Current parent-teacher relationship. Both teachers and parents were asked to describe their perception of their current parent-teacher relationship. Five teachers (62.5%) and three parents (37.5%) described how they perceive their current relationship as high-quality because there is open communication:

I think we have a great relationship because it's very open and we talk to each other. I'm very honest with them [the parents] about what happens in the day and we speak more than I think any of the parents. We have a lot of just ongoing communication because of what's going on [impulsive behavior; at-risk child will get very upset about something or frustrated and he'll just go from zero to a hundred; challenges when it comes to following rules and transitions and directions]. (T03)

Three parents (37.5%) described how they don't think they have a negative parent-teacher relationship with their child's current teacher but they also don't perceive it as a high-

quality relationship, again referencing communication; “I wouldn't say that we have some deep relationship. I send questions back and forth” (P01).

Two parents (25%) and two teachers (25%) perceived having a current parent-teacher relationship that was strained or low-quality in nature. The two teachers described how the parents not following through on their suggestions was impacting their relationship:

And at times I feel that we are all frustrated by his [at-risk child's] mother because we know his potential and we've seen what she's, to me, that is not supporting him so there's so much we can do, and we can't really do that much more unless she's up for it. And I can't do anything other than let her know what's happening and my concerns, she's not going to change or do anything and there's nothing I can do about that. (T03)

The two parents who perceived having a strained relationship with their child's current teacher described having a negative perception of how the teacher was responding, or not, to their child in the classroom; “It's not a particularly good relationship. Not that it's bad, but she's [current teacher] taken a significant step back as far as handling him” (P03). This parent described how her son's current teacher has not only taken a step back from interacting with her son but from communicating with her as well; “And I do have access to his current teacher, she just doesn't respond.” She went on to describe what changes she wished to see from the teacher:

I would like for her [child's current teacher] to be...to be more receptive to even just talk. She still stands at the door and dismisses them, but there's no invitation or desire to even speak at that point in time. I wish that she could be more receptive to communications.

(P03)

Communication and transparency. Themes around communication and transparency emerged throughout the interviews. All 16 participants (100%) referred to communication when

describing what they value in a parent-teacher relationship. Parents and teachers described the communication they valued as being “honest” (T01), “open” (T03), and “transparent” (P01) when it comes to sharing both the good and bad:

I want to know is something wrong? Do we need to address it? Is there something out of the norm that I should know? So I value openness and transparency and the willingness to work together to solve problems. (P01)

Amongst most parents there was a sentiment of wanting to know about the negative information more so than the positive information. For example, one parent suggested that teachers may not feel like parents want to know about challenging behavior but in fact they do and they will be receptive to the information: “When it gets out of hand make those phone calls home because we as parents, we do listen to what they are telling us. Please just don't sweep them under the rug” (P04). This reference to wanting to know about their child’s behavior even if it was perceived as negative was often related to a parent’s perception that they did not know enough from their child’s previous teacher before the child was expelled:

Part of the issue that we've had [with the child’s previous teacher] is that we were not kept in abreast of the difficulties that were arising until it was pretty much well on its way. For several weeks there was no direct communication. (P03)

Among teachers, when speaking to parents, there was a sentiment of balancing negative information with positive information:

Just always giving positive feedback, even on the hardest of days. Always making sure there was a positive interaction with the mom. I felt like it was important not to tell her every little negative thing that happened, to only focus on the major things. (T02)

Four teachers (50%) and three parents (37.5%) referenced how communication can be difficult or uncomfortable. Teachers and parents discussed how they have felt nervous for a conversation around a child's behavior when they were unsure how the other would respond or react. For example one teacher described how some conversations are more difficult than others:

I think for me the harder conversations that I've had because like I said I've got some other kids that are challenging my skills right now and this child has gotten hit by other kids on occasion. That's a harder conversation to have than your child is acting aggressively than your child is a victim. It's very hard. I get a lot of anxiety around those conversations especially depending on the parent. I don't know how they're going to react. (T01)

This same teacher went on to explain how she perceives speaking to the parents of the at-risk child as easier than speaking with other parents:

These parents are pretty level-headed and I think they see themselves in their child. They're not surprised by his behaviors. Mom struggles in her schooling. I get the impression the dad has also had some issues with impulsivity. So I think they understand what I'm seeing because they've experienced it themselves and they are open to hearing that from me. Some parents may understand it, but they don't want to hear it from me. These parents are not like that. They're pretty easy parents to work with to be honest. They're really nice people. (T01)

Teachers also described an awareness that some conversations may be difficult for a parent to hear. Teachers described strategies they use to make communication more comfortable for parents, including telling parents all the details, discussing why the child may have acted in that manner (e.g., the child was frustrated or angry), and being sensitive to the parents' feelings:

Basically, what I try to do is let them know that something's happened and explain exactly what happened. If I think I know the reason behind it, if I think I understand what was motivating the child in that moment I'll try to let them know that as well just so that they have all of the information. (T01)

Communication starts at the first meeting. For 15 participants (except the one parent whose child is currently not enrolled, see Table 5) communication between the teacher and parent started during the interview process where the center or teacher was deciding whether or not they would admit the at-risk child. Parents and teachers described this initial conversation as a time where communication and transparency began. Parents described how they perceived teachers using this meeting to try to gather information about their child:

She passed out a form when we first started, asking all kinds of things that were really wonderful. What's this like? What's this like at home? What's that like at home?" Open ended questions like "Is there anything I didn't get to that you want me to know about your child? That you didn't get a chance to say before? What are your favorite things about her? What's her favorite thing to do? What's her least favorite thing to do?" That sort of thing. She really got a full picture. (P07)

Teachers described these initial meetings as a time to not only understand the child but the parents as well so that they could make an informed decision on whether or not the child was a good fit for their classroom:

We had him [at-risk child] do a visit to our classroom before he started. So we invited him and his parents to come in to meet myself and my co-teacher at a time when there were no other students or adults in the room...Then that also gave us a chance to chat

with the parents a little bit more and see how they interacted with him and chat about what they know works for him and things like that. (T08)

During the interview process, six parents (75%) and four teachers (50%) discussed having a conversation about the child's previous expulsion. Out of the six parents who told their child's current teacher, all but one parent described wanting to share that their child had been expelled because they were nervous for their child and/or anticipated future problems and therefore wanted to make sure their child's current teacher was prepared to support the child's needs:

We wanted to do that [tell the teacher about the expulsion] just because we anticipated that it was going to be a difficult transition for him. And we wanted to make sure that we had the support in place as early as possible and started the process as early as possible. (P03)

Parents alluded to how they felt initial anxiety around telling their child's teacher due to a fear of being judged about their ability to parent (teachers also described how parents appeared anxious when discussing this information). For example, one parent stated that she told her child's current teacher because she was afraid to have the situation reoccur; "I was afraid he'd get kicked out again. I was afraid that they wouldn't, yeah, I was afraid that he'd get kicked out again and I'd be screwed" (P02). This same parent went on to explain how she wanted the teacher to know up front that as a parent she cared for her child:

I think I was just nervous like maybe it really was my child and I wanted them to be aware and know that I cared, and I was concerned about this issue; set her [at-risk child] up for the most success that she could have. (P02)

Of the four teachers who found out about the child's expulsion from the parents during the interview process, two of the home-based providers described how having this transparency and communication with the parent was a deciding factor for admitting the child:

I think just being as honest as they could be. I didn't feel like anything was being hidden because they could have hidden a lot of things. I felt like they were being really, really open and they were real. They had needs and the kiddo had needs. As much as I thought about is this the right fit, that kid deserves, and she deserves a chance. More than most.
(T05)

However, this same teacher went on to explain how she also discussed with the parents during the interview process that she might not be able to keep the child if it "wasn't a good fit":

I think that the biggest thing that helped me feel okay was that mom and dad, mostly mom, mom was very open and forthcoming with me about all information that I needed. And, very open to the fact that this might not be the right fit and that we would have to take it day-by-day. So, I felt like--how do I say it--I couldn't fail...If she started with me and it didn't work out that it would be okay for me to say this isn't working. (T05)

The other two teachers who found out about the at-risk child's expulsion during the interview process described how they reassured the parents upon finding out this information that they would not expel the child. One teacher described the following when hearing about the child's expulsion:

It was actually right when they first interviewed. They were very concerned about it. They met with me before I met the girl and her little sister actually. They were very concerned that I would not think it was a good fit, but they really needed child care, so they were really worried about how it was going to go. They said that she had had

previous problems and that she had been removed. I told them that I don't kick kids out. [laughs] They were very nervous. I would say even the dad is still very nervous that I'll get sick of her, or tired of the behavior or something like that. (T04)

The two teachers also referenced how having experience helped them feel comfortable that they could support the child; "I've also been teaching for a really long time and I have a lot of experience working with children with behavioral issues. I know that I pretty much can handle most issues, so I wasn't concerned" (T03). They then described how they scheduled multiple "play dates" with the child and their parents in the classroom in order to observe the child and gather information about how to support the child; "And then we did do a couple of play dates with him, where he came in and his mom stayed in the classroom and he could just visit for a while" (T02). Teachers also expressed ways they utilized knowing about the child's behavior (e.g., aggressive towards peers, easily over stimulated, disruptive) in order to prepare for the child entering their classroom (e.g., speaking to co-teachers, adjusting routines, praising the child for good behavior). For example, for one at-risk child the teacher described the following adjustments based on the information she had learned from the parents and early observations; "Knowing that she had more energy, that she had a harder time with her directions and stuff like that, I made sure to be very clear with the directions but also give her the choices of what she needed" (T03).

Of the four teachers that were not told by the parents about the child's previous expulsion, there was a theme around feeling frustrated with the parent because they were not open and honest, and that this impacted how they spoke to the parent and ultimately how they supported the at-risk child. For example one teacher described how she didn't know about the at-risk child's behavior in the classroom until she experienced it; "I took him on--just so you know-

-not knowing any of this [child behavior]. Mom didn't tell me anything. I had to experience it first before I got told anything” (T07). The teacher went on to describe the at-risk boy as having an explosive temper, displaying physical aggression towards others, and destroying property. This same teacher went on to explain how she would have prepared for the child differently if she would have known he would be displaying certain behaviors; “I certainly would have spoken with mom so I had a better idea of what was happening and get an idea if there were any triggers that caused him to exhibit this explosive temper” (T07).

Forms and frequency of communication. Parents and teachers discussed various strategies or forms of communication, such as email, text, and parent-teacher conferences when needed:

My preferred method of communications for all families is in person which I do with every drop off and pick up. But we don't always have time for that. So, whether it's emailing, texting, phone calling, I have a Facebook obviously that's not a private communication but I share pictures actually throughout the day on my private Facebook group. (T05)

The different forms of communication discussed ranged from 0 to 5 forms (mean 2.87) for parents and 1 to 6 forms (mean 4.25) for teachers. The most common form of communication was during pick up/drop off time (62.5% of parents and 87.5% of teachers), followed by “notes” (62.5% of parents and 25% of teachers), and emails (37.5% of parents and 37.5% of teachers). Parents and teachers also mentioned parent-teacher conferences (50% of parents and 12.5% of teachers), telephone calls (25% of parents and 37.5% of teachers), and meetings prior to the child starting in the classroom (25% of parents and 25% of teachers). Teachers discussed texting

(50%) or using an app (37.5%) such as Facebook to communicate with parents throughout the day.

Parents and teachers referenced having “hour long” (T03) phone conversations at night if there were serious concerns but not enough time during the day to discuss them. For example, one teacher described using multiple forms of communication and still needing to have long conversations at night:

Sometimes with his mom though, since consistently it's so much communication, I'll just tell her that I'll email her because I can't spend all of drop off mini-conferencing with her, so I'll just make sure I email. And I'm really good about emailing immediately after school so she's not sitting around and waiting and wondering. But I'll tell her, "Everything was fine. I'm just going to email you a few things," so she's not like--And I've also had some major phone conversations with her as well, like hour long conversations. (T03)

This same teacher went on to describe how it was through these consistent, long conversations that she was able to connect with the at-risk child’s mother and perceive changes in the mother’s behavior around working with her on the child’s behavior in the classroom.

The form of communication utilized appeared to differ based on the need of the conversation and frequency in which there was communication. The frequency in which parents and teachers communicated ranged from “an everyday thing” (T06) to as needed. Everyday communication was often discussed in terms of asking how the other was doing (T05: "How are you doing today?"), checking in about how the child’s day was (T06: "How was his day?") or sharing with one another if the child was displaying any concerns or adjusting to any changes at home or school (P07: "Hey guys. Just so you know, everybody's a little sad because daddy's

gone"). For example, one teacher described how children don't often have the words to express their own needs so it is important that as a teacher she promotes an open, constant dialogue with all parents; "I think me just continuously asking, "How's your child doing? How's she doing? How's he doing? Do you have any concerns? I'm here" kind of comments, things like that" (T07). This same teacher went on to describe how her asking these questions and communicating with the at-risk child's parent, encouraged the parent to share more information about the child:

I think the biggest thing that has been happening just of late is that she is volunteering information whereas beforehand I had to keep constantly asking her for updates and that kind of stuff. I am seeing more like, coming in in the morning and saying, "He had a really bad night" or "He started his day off wrong." (T07)

As needed conversations were usually discussed as longer more targeted communication which occurred when there was concern about the child behavior or when the teacher or parent perceived challenges within their relationship. These conversations were usually conducted through formal meetings or through after hour phone calls. One teacher described how she was having daily check-ins with the mother at drop off time but as the at-risk child's behavior intensified, she needed to have a longer conversation:

I'm just trying to think about the conversation, the hour long talk I had or what it was about it, because there's always so many talks. I think the major conversations that I had with her that are more the vocal ones are how disrespectful he can get... I think that when it has to be every day for a week, and I did think that it was taking too much time from the teacher. That's when I called

and had some serious conversations about my concerns for kindergarten and how when he goes to kindergarten it's going to be very different. (T03)

The teacher then discussed how having this long, after hour conversation gave the at-risk child's mother the chance to ask questions and express her own concerns:

I was letting her know what I was seeing in the classroom. I mean the reason why the conversation was so long was because she kept asking me questions and she was really receptive. But you could tell this really concerned because she noticed too. (T03)

Two teachers (25%) and one parent (12.5%) described how they would describe their desired forms and frequency of communication as “family like open communication” (T06) where both sides are constantly sharing information, asking the other for information, and feeling comfortable discussing concerns as they arise. When asked at the end of the interview if there was anything else that as a parent she wanted researchers to know about preschool expulsion, one mother described the following around communication; “Sitting down and talking, not coming off and telling you the bad things, what is going on at home, how can we fix it, how can we adjust more to the classroom, adjust more from home to school” (P08).

Barriers to communication. Parents and teachers discussed barriers to communication, such as not having the time during the day because of work schedules/obligations (T04), parents not being able to attend pick up/drop off (P01, T08), and not wanting to speak in front of the child (P03, T01). One parent described how in her past parent-teacher relationship she perceived interpersonal barriers to communicating with her child's past teacher; “Other than hectic, yeah it was just really hard [with the previous teacher] to have a conversation before or after school you know” (P02). Three teachers (37.5%) discussed how their center administration puts pressure on

them to promote family involvement but that their center does not support them in doing this. These teachers referenced the desire for more time to communicate with families and/or more staff so that they can step away from the classroom to have a conversation with parents:

My agency definitely wants me to have the relationships with the families. I think they're definitely encouraging us to have regular conversations. We're expected to document having conversations with all of the families at some point. The issue is sometimes our staffing model makes it kind of tricky to have the conversations in a timely fashion. (T01)

This teacher went on to describe how having to be in the classroom all day, even during nap time, makes it difficult to find space to speak to families. She went on to describe how she feels like there is limited support at her center to leave the classroom in order to have private conversations. However, she described how if she can schedule parent-teacher conferences in advance her boss will try to help her find coverage:

If I can schedule a conference my boss is very good about making sure that there's coverage in my classroom if I need to do something like that. If I work with her [boss], we can figure something out in the schedule. In that way they can be accommodating. There are sometimes people available to step in if I need that. (T01)

A total of eight teachers and parents also discussed challenges with communicating during pick up/drop off time. Barriers during this time included parents working long hours, teachers being too busy with other children and parents, and/or teachers unwilling to discuss challenging topics at this time. One parent described how because of her work schedule she would pick her child up later in the evening when the main teacher had already left for the night:

The only thing I would ask is that in the evenings there isn't always a great hand-off of information in between her teacher during the day and whoever is working

in the evenings. If we do a late pick-up, we don't get any information until a day or two later. So that's the only thing I would change. Whether it's a note or just a making sure that information gets relayed, but sometimes you can only do a six o'clock pick-up. You can't do a five o'clock pick-up. So that's kind of what happens. (P07)

Communication impacts a teacher's decision to expel. A final theme that emerged under communication was teachers' discussion of how communication with parents can build understanding and therefore collaboration. For example, one teacher described how she believed that open dialogue with the at-risk child's mother helped the mother come to terms with her daughter needing extra support for her disruptive behavior in the classroom; "However, I think because mom and I have such an open dialogue and communication that if I felt like that [behavioral interventions, therapies] would be needed, mom would be more than open to that's a possibility" (T05). Three teachers (37.5%) described how having a parent-teacher relationship built around open communication impacted their decision to not expel the at-risk child. One teacher described how she would not expel the child but that she is concerned for the child in the future and has communicated this to the child's parents:

Honestly, I haven't really felt that for this particular child. This particular kid I've talked to the parents about the behavior because I do feel his behavior is extreme enough and aggressive enough that he could get expelled when he goes to kindergarten...His mom is really on board and communicating, and dad, too, actually. Both of them communicate with us on a real regular basis and are trying to be supportive of their child so that he can be successful in school. (T01)

Another teacher described in detail how she has had thoughts of expelling the at-risk child, but that she would not do this because his parents communicate with her and work with her:

I have had that thought [expulsion] in my mind many times and then I correct myself and said, no, he needs a chance. I got to give him the chance to get through. But it's the child that you see carpool in the morning and usually your whole body tense up and like, "Oh, I don't know how today's going to go." And he may come in as happy as can be with mom and he may come in testy. You don't even know. She'll say this morning hasn't been great. He's been testing me, or he's been quick to lose his temper... The good thing is the parents are on the same page as me. They see it, they understand it. They're the first parent that'll come in and ask, "How was his day?" They're trying to stay on top of it and they keeping a good eye on what's going on. I feel like they care about what's going on. (T06)

This same teacher went on to explain how she believes she created a relationship with the at-risk child's parents by listening to them and therefore understanding their concerns:

I think just being willing to listen to them and understanding. They know that I understand what they're going through and vice versa with their child. And I know a while back the dad kept saying, mom always afraid you're going to kick him out. I think that's made them feel a little more comfortable that they know we're working on this together. (T06)

Undermining behavior. Teachers and parents also discussed topics that would fall under the undermining factor of the CRQ measure used in the quantitative study. Undermining behavior was either described in the context of the parent-teacher relationship or when

discussing factors that affect the relationship, such as government policies (T06) or center administration (P03). The frequency in which themes around undermining were discussed was more prominent among teachers than parents. Six teachers (75%) described feeling undermined in their current relationship indicating concerns such as parents not following through on their recommendations or suggestions to manage child behavior and parents holding back information. One teacher described feeling like she needed support for working with the parent, not the child, because the parent's behavior was impacting her ability to manage the child behavior in the classroom; "I feel that the more support that I need is from the parents. Because when they're not on board, he goes off" (T03). This teacher went on to undermine the parent's role as caregiver, explaining how she believes the child behavior was a result of the at-risk child's home; "And that's what's so bad about this whole thing is that he can be totally fine, but the parents are struggling with him keeping this consistency for him at home" (T03).

During parental discussion of undermining, themes around feeling like their child's teacher (past or present) was not working with them to help their child were most common. Three parents (37.5%) provided evidence of feeling undermined in their previous parent-teacher relationship, describing feeling like their child's previous teacher criticized their approach to parenting and blamed their parenting style when expelling the at-risk child:

But the one day she [previous teacher] called me and she said, I mean she was basically kicking me out, so she said some very hurtful things about nursing. I think what she was saying was, I tried to block it out, I think what she said was that he [at-risk child] was too fussy ... Yeah this is what she kept saying, "He's too fussy, he's not ready for daycare." And she was blaming it on nursing because she was saying, "You have too strong of a bond with him." (P06)

To a lesser extent, parents described undermining in their current parent-teacher relationship. In a current relationship, a parent described how she perceived that her child's current teacher was not listening to her suggestions although she wanted to inform the teacher about what to do to support the child based on what she had learned from the expulsion process:

We tried to [have a conversation about our child's behavior] but were unable to arrange schedules with the teacher and the special education teacher. We had a meeting at the time of enrollment, but [at-risk child's] behavior was still really great. Behavior was great, and I don't think she [child's current teacher] understood what we were trying to tell her. (P03)

This same parent went on to use how she had felt undermined in order to explain what she thinks teachers can do to show they value a parent-teacher relationship:

I think taking our suggestions seriously. There's been a lot of issues with people not believing that ADHD is an actual thing, they certainly don't believe that sensory processing is an actual thing. Being educated or being willing to accept that the education that we are willing to provide, because we provided articles and things like that to try and get people educated on it. (P03)

Qualitative Study Discussion

Our results from interviews with parents and teachers offer additional insight into the parent-teacher relationship that could not be captured in traditional survey instruments. Specifically, parents and teachers consistently discussed themes around the importance of honest and transparent communication with one another. Additional themes included barriers to forming a quality parent-teacher relationship such as time, physical and emotional space, and undermining behaviors.

General Discussion

This paper presents two studies which together explored the association between the parent-teacher relationship and a child's risk for preschool expulsion. Several notable findings emerged from each study. The quantitative study found that for children who had not been expelled, a high-quality parent-teacher relationship was associated with a lower risk for expulsion, with this effect being strongest for Black children, regardless of teacher race/ethnicity. However, for children who had previously been expelled, we found no quantitative association between the parent-teacher relationship and future expulsion risk. The qualitative study outlined specific protective qualities of the parent-teacher relationship for children with a history of expulsion who are successfully being retained in a new program. Themes from interviews with parents and teachers suggest that a child's prior expulsion history can influence the formation of future parent-teacher relationships. Further, the parents and teachers interviewed consistently attributed the successful retention of the child in the new program to the transparent and open communication between home and school. Put more simply, the relationship between teachers and parents is at the core of the child's reduced risk for future expulsion. Each finding will be described below in greater detail considering prior research and with an eye towards opportunities for intervention.

Children Who Have Not Been Expelled

Parent-teacher relationships can protect against preschool expulsion. Our quantitative findings advance our knowledge of the benefits of parent-teacher relationships in early childhood (Cox, 2005; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Epstein, 2001) by directly linking a teacher's perception of their relationship with a child's parent to their decision about whether or not to request the expulsion of a child. Our prior work showed that preschool teachers who had

requested an expulsion in the past year had more negative perceptions of parents in general, with teachers perceiving parents as undermining their recommendations for children and finding it difficult to get parents to agree on how to deal with child behavioral concerns (Zulauf & Zinsser, 2019). The present study extends this work by showing that for children who have not yet been expelled, a quality parent-teacher relationship is associated with a lower risk of expulsion. Prior work has also shown that when teacher-child race does not match (e.g., black child and white teacher) providing teachers with information about a child's family background results in higher severity ratings of child behavior (Gilliam et al., 2016). This result was in the context of teachers being provided with information about a child and family that they had never meet, therefore the teachers could not had formed a relationship with the child's parents. Results from our work suggest that regardless of teacher race, teachers who are able to form a positive relationship with a child's parent, may be better able to handle and adjust for information about a child's family background. When parents and teachers have a quality relationship, teachers may learn more about the struggles, and strengths, of the children and families they serve thus enabling them to retain a child in their classroom. In the absence of a parent-teacher relationship, teachers may perceive the child behavior as problematic, feel that the parents are exacerbating the behavior (e.g., by not following through on recommendations), attribute child behavior problems to parental characteristics or behaviors (e.g., child behavior will not change because of home life), and endorse greater feelings of hopelessness that the child behavior may change, all of which may be related to a teacher's decision to expel the child (Gilliam & Reyes, 2018; Gilliam et al., 2016; Zulauf & Zinsser, 2019).

With increasing pressure to curtail the rates in which preschoolers are being expelled, researchers, administrators, and government officials are searching for viable options to support

teachers in their efforts to retain children who show challenging behavior. Our results point to the parent-teacher relationship as a potential preventative strategy that can be promoted in all early child care settings. Serious consideration should be given to increasing training and ongoing guidance for teachers and administrators around the protective qualities of the parent-teacher relationship, so that teachers understand how to establish quality parent-teacher relationships, increase their empathic understanding of children and families, and learn how to engage all parents prior to, as well as when a child is displaying challenging behavior.

Black children benefit the most. Not only do our results suggest that a quality parent-teacher relationship decreases a child's risk for expulsion, but this association was strongest for Black children, who are disproportionately being expelled from preschool (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The disparate rate at which Black children are being expelled is likely the result of a teacher's inaccurate perception of a child's behavior as more disruptive or dangerous (Gilliam et al., 2016; Todd, Thiem, & Neel, 2016; Okonofua and Eberhardt, 2015) and/or the result of implicit biases towards families of color (Azevedo et al., 2013; Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, & Davies, 2004; Zulauf & Zinsser, 2018). One possible explanation for our result is that a quality parent-teacher relationship may overcome teacher bias towards Black children and their families and protect Black children from being expelled.

Prior work has outlined how teacher-child racial matching may impact a teacher's perception of child behavior. For instance, in one study when Black students were rated by Black teachers, they were viewed as less disruptive and less likely to be suspended compared to when they were rated by other-race teachers (Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, & Shuan, 1990). Another study found that over the school year, White teachers were more likely than Black teachers to escalate their disciplinary responses to Black children (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). Our work stands in

contrast to these studies by finding a strong association between the parent-teacher relationship and a child's expulsion risk for Black children regardless of the race of their teacher. As a result, our work may suggest that perhaps parent-teacher relationships support cultural empathy and equip teachers to better understand the needs of Black children (Downer, Goble, Myers, & Pianta, 2016).

Recent legislative efforts aimed at decreasing preschool expulsion have begun to acknowledge the role that teacher implicit bias plays in expulsion rates and its disparities. For example, IL Public Act 100-0105 (Illinois Register, 2019) recommends that programs train teachers about the role of implicit bias, although it is unclear whether or how programs will comply. Implicit bias may be reduced through interventions designed to either address biases directly (Devine, Forscher, Austin & Cox, 2012) or through increasing teachers' empathy for children (Okonofua, Walton, & Eberhardt, 2016). Our work suggests that through building quality parent-teacher relationships, especially with Black families, teachers may reduce the rate in which they are expelling Black children. Further work is needed to fully understand how the parent-teacher relationship may overcome teacher bias and if the match of teacher and child race matters. However, at this time in lieu of funding and increased resources, building high-quality relations between teachers and families may represent a way to curtail the disproportionate rate in which Black boys are being expelled from preschool.

Recommendations to promote relationships with all families. Taken together, for children who have not been expelled, our results suggest the importance of teachers promoting quality parent-teacher relationships with all families in their classroom, especially Black families. To promote relationships with all families, a teacher must acknowledge the potential institutional, social, and individual challenges that families may face, impacting their

engagement with teachers and schools (Hill & Craft, 2003). Some of the barriers that may decrease or impact parental involvement include parents' own school experience, intimidation or perception of school climate/school personnel, differing perceptions of the role of parents and teachers, or lack of resources/time to be involved in their child's schooling. Absence of parental physical involvement in school does not mean that parents are not involved in other ways at home (Lawson, 2003) or that the parent does not care about their child's schooling (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2004). However, if teachers or center administrators hold biased perceptions towards families, especially those facing these barriers and challenges, then the formation and quality of the parent-teacher relationship may be negatively impacted. In order to promote quality parent-teacher relationships with all families, especially Black families, teachers may benefit from gaining training and support around the following: 1) the importance of and how to pursue meaningful relationships with all families in the classroom; 2) how to create initial positive contact with parents early on; 3) how to consistently communicate with parents across a variety of means; and 4) how to reduce individual bias in order to learn alongside families about their own individualized needs (Knopf & Swick, 2008; Swick, 2004; Swick & Hooks, 2005).

Children Who Have Been Expelled

Each day approximately 250 preschool children are expelled from their early childhood center (National Survey of Children's Health, 2016). That means each day 250 parents are faced with the burden of finding alternative care and deciding whether or not to disclose their child's expulsion to their child's new teacher, all while managing their emotional reaction to the expulsion. Likewise, as these expelled children enter a new care arrangement, those teachers must accommodate and support a new child into their classroom and form a new relationship with a family struggling to overcome a negative experience in the prior placement. This

transition following the expulsion represents a unique experience that impacts the child, their parents, and teachers (Martin, Bosk & Bailey, 2018). Findings from our qualitative study indicate that expulsion may also impact the formation of the parent-teacher relations and qualities of a protective parent-teacher relationship.

Themes that emerged in interviews with teachers and parents, such as the importance of honest communication and transparency, offer insight into protective aspects of the parent-teacher relationship for children who have been expelled. For example, some teachers discussed how open communication with a parent impacted their thinking process around whether or not they would expel the at-risk child. Notably, this finding is somewhat in contradiction to the quantitative findings discussed above. A potential reason for these divergent findings across the two substudies is the difference in the way relationships were assessed. Specifically, in the first study, the CRQ used to measure parent-teacher relationships focused on four constructs (Undermining, Support, Endorsement, Agreement). Conversely, themes emerged inductively in our qualitative study around communication, honesty and understanding. The CRQ is one of the first measures designed to directly capture parent-teacher relationships for young children and infants. Our results suggest that the CRQ may not be capturing all aspects of the parent-teacher relationship that are specific to expulsion. For instance, communication was a central topic for parents and teachers when discussing parent-teacher relationships in our study. However, in the CRQ, there is only one item assessing communication between parents and teachers ("communication with this parent is open and easy"). Furthermore, in our exploratory analysis, the factor of endorsement positively predicted expulsion risk. Exploration of the creation of this factor indicated that endorsement was the least derived factor of the CRQ both in terms of prior literature as well as its strength in predicting parental involvement (Lang et al., 2016; Lang,

Shoppe-Sullivan, & Jeon, 2017). When thinking about this factor, in particular, this finding may be suggesting that teachers gain empathy for parents struggling with a child who displays behavioral or emotional issues that place them at risk for expulsion. This would align with our interviews with parent and teachers, where understanding and empathy was something that a teacher discussed when explaining why they would not expel the at-risk child. If this theory about endorsement is accurate, this would represent a unique aspect of the parent-teacher relationship that would be important to measure and place in interventions.

Our qualitative work suggest that the relationship between teachers and parents is a critical component of a teacher's decision to continue to retain a previously expelled child in their current classroom. Therefore consideration should be given to adding items to the PERM around a teacher's perception of their relationship with a child's parent so that the measure can more accurately examine teacher decision factors around preschool expulsion. Capturing parent-teacher relationships in our understanding of risk factors for preschool expulsion, may increase the ability to screen and assess whether teachers and centers require preventative efforts for expulsion. To understand how to support parents and teachers who are faced with handling a child's expulsion, the field needs to be able to capture and measure the aspects of a relationship that are protective for at-risk children. Future work is needed to continue to unpack the protective qualities of the parent-teacher relationship for children at-risk for expulsion and to capture these in measurement tools that can be used to train and provide guidance to practitioners around how to interact with families in quality ways.

Recommendations to support quality parent-teacher relationships. Below we outline recommendations and areas of interventions drawn from the qualitative interviews around how to

begin to form and support high-quality parent-teacher relationships for children who have been expelled.

Positive communication early. A key to promoting a quality parent-teacher relationship is establishing communication at the onset before child behavior concerns arise. By having communication early, teachers and parents gain a better understanding of each other and how to work together to foster a child's growth (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Lang, Shoppe-Sullivan, & Jeon, 2017). Communicating early helps promote an open relationship, one that may empower collaboration when a behavioral concern emerges. In our previous work, we found that teachers who had a history of expelling a preschool child had a reactive style of communication with parents resulting in them not talking to parents until they felt that they could not address the behavioral concerns about the child on their own (Zulauf and Zinsser, 2019). Parents in our qualitative sample described feeling caught off guard by their child's expulsion and perceived that their child's previous teacher did not communicate with them about their concerns until it was too late. These results suggest that a potential area of intervention is establishing rules and guidelines promoting parent-teacher communication at the beginning of a relationship.

Parents and teachers in our qualitative sample discussed potential strategies for promoting early communication, such as setting up meetings prior to the child starting in the classroom. Parents and teachers described these meetings as a way to get to know one another as well as create an open line of communication around the child's specific needs. Center policies may also support teachers and parents in establishing positive communication early on. Specifically, creating center policies focused on parental involvement might empower parents and teachers to communicate and place them on the right path for positive interactions throughout the school year (Lopez et al., 2001; Pena, 2000). Centers may want to provide parents

with clear rules and policies that all parents can understand, provide all parents with resources at the beginning of the year, and establish policies that promote communication with parents early and often rather than once a child misbehaves.

Time and space to communicate. Teachers and parents discussed a theme around the importance of communicating early and often as well as sharing both the good and bad. They also discussed barriers to communicating frequently such as finding the time and having the physical space. One strategy that parents and teachers listed as useful to promoting open and frequent communication were asking prompting questions such as "how was your day" or letting the other know that they are ready to listen, "I am here if anything comes up". These little statements may represent a way to show to the other side that you are here to listen and help out. Another common barrier to communication was challenges with pick up/drop off time. Parents and teachers listed this as a common time to try to talk to one another but also listed obstacles, such as too much going on or the parent/teacher not in attendance. Therefore, parents and teachers may require other viable times and ways to communicate. Potential interventions may include using an App to communicate throughout the day, texting, or writing notes to one another. Lastly, teachers often discussed the burden of having longer more targeted conversations on their own time (after school). Center administrators may play a critical role in supporting teachers and parents with these longer conversations by providing coverage for teachers to step out of the room during the day or promoting more frequent parent-teacher check-ins throughout the year.

Support around difficult conversations. With all young children who are developing social and emotional skills, challenging behaviors are going to occur in the classroom. For children who have been expelled, they are more likely to present with behaviors that teachers

perceive as challenging or stressful to manage. Our work suggests that when parents and teachers can work together, children are more likely to succeed in the classroom. However, sometimes conversations around child behavior can be difficult for a parent and teacher to have. Therefore, a potential area of intervention is supporting teachers during these difficult conversations with parents so that each side can come out feeling heard and ready to work together to support the child. The following steps may be helpful for teachers who are faced with discussing a child behavior concern with a parent. Teachers may benefit from first noticing how they are feeling about the behavior and their own emotions that they may be bringing to the relationship (e.g., stressed, upset, hopeless). Second, teachers may benefit from taking the time to understand why the child is acting that way (e.g., the child was angry so she hit his classmate or the child was overstimulated so he hid in the corner) or even how the parents might respond or feel when they hear this (e.g., this parent may be caught off guard by this behavior or this parent may see themselves in their child's behavior). After the teacher can reflect on these things, the teacher may be better prepared to partner with a parent. The best way to convey to a parent that as a teacher you are concerned and want to work with the parent may be through using "I statements", asking for the parent's perspective, and finding common ground with the parent.

Support around communicating with parents about their child's previous expulsion.

For a child who has been expelled, the parent-teacher relationship begins at the admission process. The admission process is a time where teachers can gather information about the child and their family, parents can see that their child's new teacher will care for their child, and communication begins. The admission process is also a time where teachers may decide if they will admit the at-risk child. With increasing legislation aimed at limiting preschool expulsion, an anticipated consequence may be that some early childhood programs will change their

enrollment practices; denying admission to children perceived as likely to need more resources and supports (i.e., costlier). Parents in our sample endorsed a lot of anxiety around disclosing their child's expulsion to their new provider. One teacher discussed how upon parental disclosure she became concerned about admitting the child and told the parents she had the right to expel the child at a later time. As a result of increasing demands to not expel children, center administrators and teachers may try to deny admission to children that have previously been expelled fearing that they will not be able to retain them, resulting in these children being excluded from the care that is most convenient, affordable, and/or the best care for their and their families' needs (Buchmann, DiPrete & McDaniel, 2008).

In our sample, teachers described benefiting from a parent immediately disclosing their child's expulsion. These teachers felt that parental disclosure enabled them to understand the child behavior/needs and establish honest parent-teacher communication that is essential to a high-quality relationship. Taken together, our results point to the critical time of the admission process and initial meetings between parents and teachers. Parents who are open and honest from the onset, and teachers who listen to the parents, may establish empathy for one another enabling a teacher to feel empowered to support an at-risk child. That being said, our sample only included teachers and parents who were successfully navigating a new relationship following an expulsion, missing from this study are the voices of those who have struggled in the relationship, possibly resulting in subsequent child expulsions. It is also possible that parental early disclosure of prior expulsions may put their child at risk of being denied admission. Additional research is needed to better understand the risks associated with disclosing prior expulsion to a new teacher or program.

Training around how to support the emotions of parents. To overcome potential teacher bias towards children who have been expelled and their families, thus decreasing the potential tendency to decline admission, teachers may benefit from training around how to work with parents of previously expelled children. Parents in our sample described feeling caught off guard by the expulsion, upset with how their child's previous teacher interacted (or lack of) with their child, and "traumatized" from the experience. Following the expulsion, parents described feeling rushed to find a new child care arrangement and not having the time to process their emotions. Therefore, parents may bring their emotions created from the expulsion to the new center. Parents may be guarded and have their walls up from the expulsion, needing to see and hear certain things from the new teacher in order to feel comfortable sharing their child's experience. Some parents may have a natural tendency to disclose information about how the expulsion affected their child to look for support and empathy from their child's new teacher. Other parents might come into the new classroom determined not to have their child expelled again demanding resources and supports they believe will help their child succeed. It may benefit teachers to know that these parents are not trying to undermine their role as a teacher but that they are showing (in their own way) that they care and want to see that the teacher will also care for their child. Being able to respectfully and honestly communicate during these initial meetings may build understanding which may promote a quality parent-teacher relationship decreasing an at-risk child's risk for future expulsion.

Limitations

The present studies are not without limitations. Although the mixed-method design gives greater depth to our analyses, these data are cross-sectional; we, therefore, cannot infer causality. For example, although we have defined the moderation model above, we cannot infer the

directionality of the associations between the parent-teacher relationship and expulsion risk. In future studies, the collection of data at multiple time points, perhaps across a whole school year, would allow us to examine the emergence of stressful patterns and changes within the parent-teacher relationships. It should be noted that this is not a representative sample and the generalizability of our results are limited by our sampling procedure. Furthermore, we only surveyed and interviewed lead teachers which may not be the teacher with whom a family has the closest relationship with, even though lead teachers hold more power in the discipline decision-making process. Lastly, we were not able to recruit parent-teacher dyads of the same child, therefore our results only capture one side of a two-sided relationship between parents and teachers.

Future Directions

We acknowledge that following an ecological view, parent-teacher relationships are formed within the context of early childhood education programs, which themselves have several structural features that can influence the quality of the relationships (e.g., center leadership, policies, the program's overall climate and culture). Future studies should explore center-level factors that may impact the formation of parent-teacher relationships. Given prior work that has documented the significant role that racial biases play in teachers' perceptions of children's negative behavior and their expulsion decision making process, special attention should be given to how the parent-teacher relationship can be built for children and families of color, which exploration of how the match between teacher and child race may impact these relationships (Gilliam et al., 2016; Wishard, Shivers, Howes & Ritchie, 2003). Understanding such relationships will be critical in efforts to reduce racial disparities in expulsion rates.

To fully invest in parent-teacher relationships, there needs to be an emphasis on not only understanding teachers' perceptions of the parent-teacher relationship but that of parents as well. Speaking to parents is critical to understanding the transactional relationship between parents and teachers. To the best of our knowledge, this was the first study of preschool expulsion that captured the experiences of both parents and teachers in one study, albeit to a limited extent. Future studies designed to speak to parents of children who have been expelled may provide greater insight into the effect of expulsion, challenges practitioners and families face when working with an at-risk child, and further ways to protect against the use of harsh discipline.

Conclusions and Implications

Our youngest students, preschoolers, are being expelled from early learning environments at a higher rate than in K-12 schools. We demonstrate both quantitatively and qualitatively that the parent-teacher relationship can protect children from preschool expulsion. Expulsion sets off a devastating cascade of negative events for children and families and is predictive of poorer academic and social-emotional outcomes over time. Building strong, collaborative, and respectful relationships between families, teachers, and centers will be necessary to curtail this disciplinary trend. One particularly important area for intervention is promoting high-quality parent-teacher relationships for all children in early education with special attention to how these relationships may differ for children who have previously been expelled. For children who have been expelled interventions should focus on promoting communication and transparency which in return may promote understanding and collaboration for supporting at-risk children.

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Table 1

Description of Survey Participants

	At-Risk Child in Current Class (N=105)	No At-Risk Child in Current Class (N=190)	Full Sample (N=295)
Female	70.4	66.3	67.0
Highest Level of Education			
Less than Associates	0.09	50.5	21.5
Associates	14.2	21.5	30.5
Bachelors	81.9	26.3	45.7
Graduate	3.8	0.02	2.3
Field of Study			
Child Development	35	52.6	46.1
Psychology	29	0.05	12.8
Education	41	42.1	41.3
Race/Ethnicity			
Hispanic/Latino	38.0	45.2	43.7
White	84.7	68.9	75.0
Black	15.2	16.8	15.6
Other	0.0	0.01	0.01
Center Type			
Center Based	60.0	75.7	65.8
Faith Based	18.1	15.3	19.0
Head Start/Public	21.9	8.9	12.0

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics by Child Expulsion History and Child Race

Measures	Overall (N= 434)			Black (N= 116)						Non-Black (N= 318)					
	<i>M</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>At-risk (n=41)</i>			<i>Non-risk (n=75)</i>			<i>At-risk (n=102)</i>			<i>Non-risk (n=216)</i>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Future Expulsion Risk (PERM)</i>															
Total	36.45	13-54	12.09	47.66	33-54	3.86	28.29	13-52	12.60	42.53	17-54	7.10	34.27	14-53	12.01
Classroom Disruption	9.33	3-15	3.28	12.24	9-15	1.45	7.37	3-14	3.36	10.82	5-15	2.27	8.74	3-15	3.27
Hopelessness	9.07	3-14	3.27	11.51	6-13	1.46	7.16	3-14	3.44	10.60	4-14	2.01	8.53	3-14	3.37
Fear of Accountability	8.97	2-15	3.25	11.85	7-15	1.72	6.95	2-13	3.31	10.28	3-15	2.32	8.50	3-15	3.23
Teacher Stress	9.09	3-15	3.36	12.05	9-15	1.41	6.81	3-14	3.47	10.82	3-14	2.26	8.49	3-15	3.24
<i>Teacher-Parent Relationship (CRQ)</i>															
Total	61.76	22-119	14.45	58.27	48-77	5.76	70.69	46-104	12.04	53.62	22-119	12.08	63.24	33-102	15.2
Support	48.11	14-68	8.82	50.85	41-59	4.28	51.91	36-68	6.03	44.34	25-68	9.04	48.12	14-64	9.42
Agreement	12.08	4-22	3.94	9.24	5-16	2.30	14.01	6-20	3.92	10.46	6-22	3.28	12.72	4-22	3.96
Undermining	20.55	1-34	6.48	25.51	9-32	5.12	18.45	2-34	6.87	22.10	1-34	5.91	19.63	1-34	6.23
Endorsement	22.11	6-32	4.13	23.68	16-31	3.65	23.23	16-30	3.72	20.91	12-32	4.47	22.04	6-30	3.96

Table 3

Correlations among Parent-Teacher Relationship and Future Expulsion Risk

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(1) CRQ Total	—	.78**	.61**	-.50**	.50**	-.54**	-.43**	-.54**	-.49**	-.52**
(2) CRQ Support		—	.13**	.08	.55**	-.12**	-.07	-.17**	-.08	-.13**
(3) CRQ Agreement			—	-.62**	-.06	-.71**	-.62**	-.67**	-.65**	-.67**
(4) CRQ Undermining				—	-.62**	.71**	.62**	.65**	.70**	.65**
(5) CRQ Endorsement					—	.17**	.21**	.12**	.18**	.11*
(6) PERM Total						—	.92**	.91**	.90**	.94**
(7) PERM Classroom Disruption							—	.80**	.76**	.83**
(8) PERM Hopelessness								—	.75**	.81**
(9) PERM Fear of Accountability									—	.81**
(10) PERM Teacher Stress										—

Note. Spearman correlations (2-tailed) of imputed data used for SEM are reported. $N = 435$ for all variables.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4

Three Way Interaction Analysis of Variance

	Mean Square	DF	F value
Risk Status	525.29	111.58	46.44**
CRQ	314.61	144.37	27.81**
Race	2.21	163.65	0.20
Risk Status by CRQ	449.37	110.83	39.72**
Risk Status by Race	10.74	123.69	0.95
CRQ by Race	14.98	140.24	1.32
Risk Status by CRQ by Race	86.95	111.72	7.69*

Note. * $p < .01$. ** $p < .0001$.

Table 5

Description of Interview Participants

Participant ID	Participant description	At-risk child description	Previous center	Current center	Description of parent/current teacher by participant	Future expulsion risk as perceived by the participant
P01	White; married; 35-44-year-old; graduate degree; employed full time.	Girl; White; 3 years old; expelled for classroom disruption (not listening; ripping up things).	Independent private center-based care; enrolled for 7 months prior to expulsion.	Independent private center-based care (Montessori)	Serious, calm, and able to get down on the child's level.	"No, not at all."
P02	White; married; 45-54-year-old; graduate degree; employed full time.	Boy; White; 4 years old; expelled for harming others (hitting and scratching peers).	Home-based; enrolled for 2 months prior to expulsion.	Independent private center-based care	Organized; reputation for being good for boys because she is no nonsense; firm but has a nurturing side.	"I don't know. Yeah, I don't know."
P03	White; married; 35-44-year-old; graduate degree; employed full time.	Boy; White; 5 years old; expelled for hitting peers and being destructive with property.	Three expulsions: 1) Independent private center-based care, 2) Faith-based, 3) Independent private center-based care. Child was at two of the programs for a couple of months before expulsion and the other program for 18 months. Following the third expulsion child completed a behavioral school prior to being at his current school (public).	Public school	White; 30 years old; has been at current center for over 5 years; pregnant; exhausted.	"Yes currently. And I think it was a combination of the teacher and the administration. They are angling to push him out."

P04	Bi-racial (White and Black); never married; 35-44-year-old; did not complete high school; employed full time.	Girl; Bi-racial; 3 years old; expelled for classroom disruption and not complying with rules.	Public school; multiple early pick-ups, child excused from class to sit in principal office; never formally expelled but retained at the same level in a different classroom.	Public school	Outreaching; goes above and beyond.	“No.”
P05	White; never married; 45-54-year-old; did not complete high school; retired.	Girl; White; 4 years old; expelled for hitting peers and classroom disruption (listening not paying attention, crawling on tables, taking stuff from teacher, yelling “no”).	Public school; enrolled for 2 weeks prior to school telling Mother that daughter was “too young” and that mother should wait a year until daughter gets older and then reenroll her.	Not currently enrolled		N/A child is not currently enrolled in an early child care center
P06	White; married; 35-44-year-old; graduate degree; employed full time.	Boy; White; 2 years old; explanation for expulsion was that mom had too strong of bond with child; hard for child to be in daycare (e.g., too fussy) and not fair to other children.	Home-based	Independent private center-based care	Maternal; Grandma age; patient and understanding; loves the kids.	“No, no definitely not.”
P07	White; married; 35-44-year-old; graduate degree; employed full time.	Girl; White; 4 years old; expelled for bathroom accidents, taking up too much of time, not participating; later diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.	Faith-based; enrolled for seventy-five days.	Independent private center-based care	What a preschool teacher would look like; teaching for 40 years; lovely; calm; soothing voice; cares about the children.	“Absolutely, no. We’re more protected at this center because there are rules about how you can and cannot ask someone to leave.”
P08	Black; never married; 35-44-year-	Boy; Black; expelled for being	Public school; enrolled for 6	Independent private center-based care		Was unable to answer but had a

	old; some college; employed part time.	too hyper (wouldn't sit down and wanted to play).	months; multiple early pick-ups.			backup plan of home-schooling her son if necessary
T01		Boy; Puerto Rican; 4 years old; impulsive behavior which put himself and peers in harm; aggressive towards peers and teacher. 75% confidence of expulsion because of the time of year when child entered, child's behavior, and parent comments.		Independent private center-based care	In their twenties; Hispanic; native English speakers; unsure if they are married; Mother works full time; Mother is easy to talk with. Father is reserved and a "scary thug". Grandmother helps take care of child.	"We don't do that in my agency... This kid I've talked to his parents... His mom is really on board and communicating."
T02	White; married; 45-54-year-old; Bachelor's degree.	Boy; Hispanic; 4 years old; speech delay; expelled for being aggressive towards peers. Know child was expelled because mother told teacher.		Non-profit, Lab school located on a college campus; was enrolled for four months prior to his mother removing him so that he could stay at home with grandmother.	Bilingual family; Mother is warm; Grandmother lives in the house; don't interact with Father because he works full time.	N/A Mother removed child from classroom
T03	White/Hispanic; married; 35-44-year-old; Graduate degree.	Boy; Mixed race; 4 years old; aggressive behavior towards peers. Know child was expelled because parents told teacher.		Independent private center-based care	Parents are very involved. Father is more disciplinarian, stern, has higher expectations. Child is more receptive and well behaved when with Father. Mother is more laid back and just lets child run around and do what he wants.	"Never."
T04	White; married; 25-34-year-old;	Girl; White; 4 years old; expelled due to		Independent private center-based care	Complicated home life; parents are	"I've never, especially not this

	Bachelor's degree.	difficulty following directions, sitting still, arguing with teachers. Know child was expelled because parents told teacher.			together and then not; not fully attentive. Child currently lives with father.	child. I mean her behavior has never been overly concerning."
T05	White; married; 35-44-year-old; Bachelor's degree.	Girl; White; 4 years old; foster care to adoption; history of abuse prior to adoption; expelled for disruptive behavior, trouble following schedule. Know child was expelled because parents told teacher.		Home-based	Adopted parents who are currently separated; both very friendly.	"No. She fits in here."
T06	White; married; 45-54-year-old; Associate degree.	Boy; White; 3 years old; Biting, hitting, kicking peers and teachers; anger issues; not being able to control his body. Teacher confidence of expulsion 8 out of 10.	Home-based; parents stated that other center was closing but teacher believes child was expelled because of the behaviors that he came in with.	Home-based	Mother works at a university; Mother is quiet but talkative. Father is a cook and overshares information; feels like father's counselor sometimes because at pick-up/drop-off he shares a lot and lingers.	"I have had that thought in my mind many times and then I correct myself and said, no, he needs a chance."
T07	White; married; 55-64-year-old; some college.	Boy; White; 4 years old; explosive temper; aggressive towards teacher; disruptive behavior. 100% confidence of expulsion although teacher was never told directly, believes she knows		Home-based	Doesn't know the Father and doesn't think he is a part of child's life; several children from different fathers; hard for Mother to acknowledge that child's behavior needs to be	"I've probably seriously considered it for the last couple months."

		because of child behavior and comments child has made.			addressed.	
T08	White/Hispanic; married; 35-44-year-old; Graduate degree.	Boy; White; 3 years old; Foster care; developmental trauma; challenges with language and social-emotional skills; expelled for hitting, screaming, pushing, difficulty following routines and directions. Know child was expelled because parents told teacher.		Public school	Foster parents; really love the child; trying to adopt child; teacher hasn't met Mother (only communicated electronically); Father positive and supportive.	"Never...we've all had a lot of trauma training and a lot of training around positive behavioral supports."

Note. Participant IDs starting in "P" indicate a parent; participant IDs starting in "T" indicate a teacher. All participants identified as female.

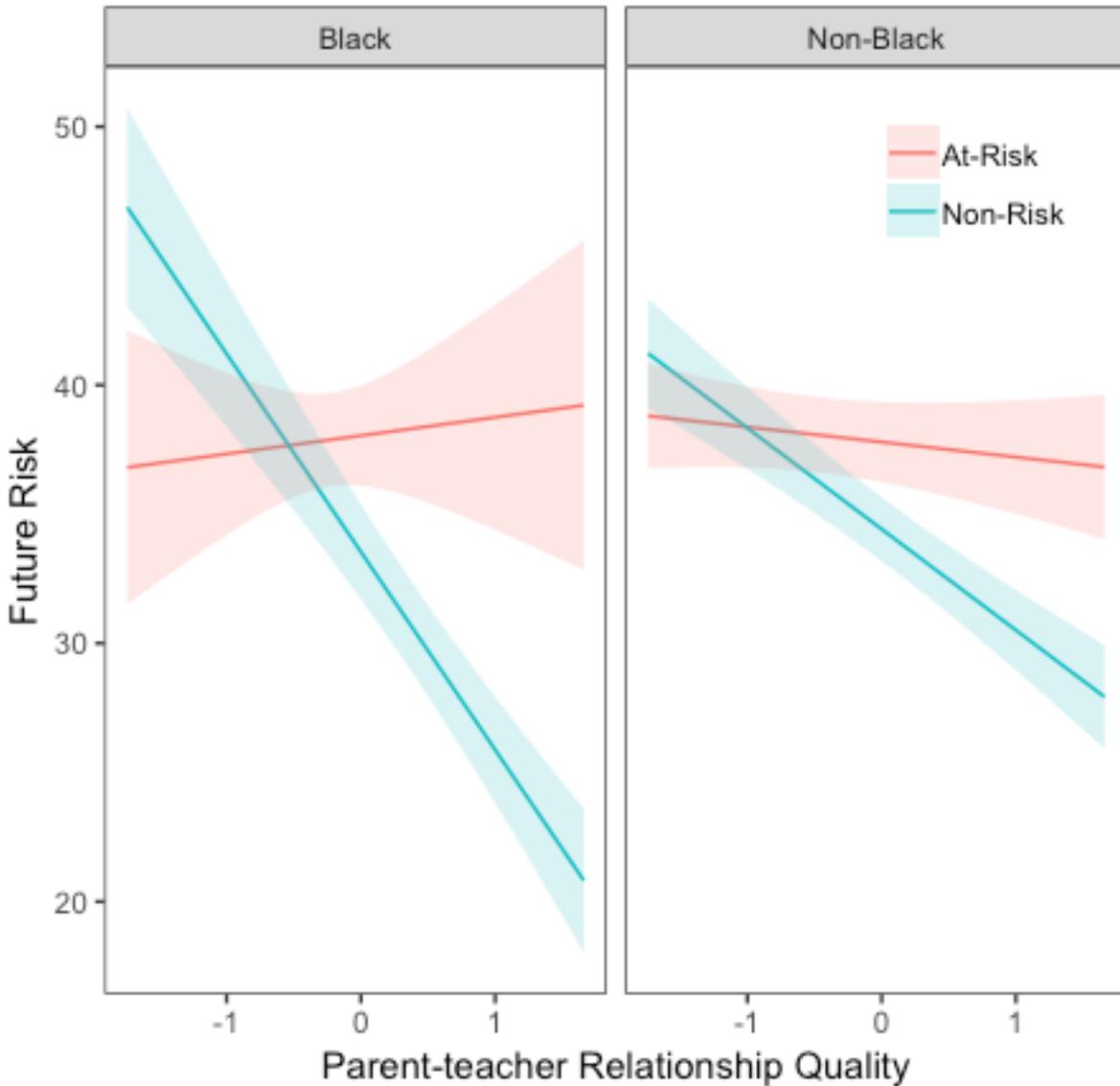


Figure 1. Scatterplot of parent-teacher relationship predicting expulsion risk by child risk status and race. The relationship between future expulsion risk and parent-teacher relationship quality for at-risk and non-risk children is significantly different for both Black and non-Black children. However, there is a three-way interaction in that within the non-risk group, the relationship between future expulsion risk and parent-teacher relationship quality is stronger for Black children compared to non-Black children.

CURRICULUM VITAE

COURTNEY ZULAUF-MCCURDY

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
3500 Civic Center Boulevard • Philadelphia, PA • 19104
(937) 638-2333 • czulau2@uic.edu

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Doctor of Philosophy 2014-2020 Adviser: Katherine Zinsser	University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Chicago, IL <i>Clinical Psychology</i> Master of Arts (received May 2016) Doctor of Philosophy (defended September 2019; conferred May 2020)
Clinical Internship 2019-2020	Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), Philadelphia, PA <i>Integrated Behavioral Health Track</i>
Bachelor of Arts 2008-2012 Honors Mentor: Sheryl Olson	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI <i>Psychology</i> University & Departmental Honors

HONORS AND AWARDS

2019	Eron Award for Outstanding Scholarly Achievement (\$500)
2017	University of Illinois President's Research in Diversity Award (\$600)
2016	Travel Award, UIC Graduate Student Council (\$275)
2015	Travel Award, UIC Psychology Department (\$600)
2015	Travel Award, UIC Graduate College (\$300)

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2018	Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health Dolores Norton Research Award "An Examination of the Parent-Teacher Relationship as Universal Prevention Against Early Childhood Expulsion"	\$5,000 (stipend)
2018	University of Illinois at Chicago Provost Award for Graduate Research "An Examination of the Parent Teacher Relationship as Universal Protection Against Preschool Expulsion"	\$3,000 (research funds)
2017-2018	Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy Dissertation Research Grant "Assessing Unintended Consequences of Preschool Expulsion Legislation for Boys of Color"	\$2,000 (research funds)

Non-Funded Grants

Administration for Children and Families, Office of Program Research and Evaluation; Society for Research in Child Development Student and Early Career Committee Dissertation Research Funding

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

1. **Zulauf, C.**, and Zinsser, K. (2019). Forestalling Preschool Expulsion: A mixed-method exploration of the potential protective role of teachers' perceptions of parents. *American Educational Research Journal*. doi: 10.3102/0002831219838236
2. Zinsser, K., **Zulauf, C.**, Nair Das, V., & Silver, H. C. (2019). Utilizing Social-Emotional Learning Supports to Address Teacher Stress and Preschool Expulsion. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 61, 33-42. doi: [10.1016/j.appdev.2017.11.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.11.006)
3. **Zulauf, C.**, Spinelli, T., & Rosenberg, J. (2018). Advocating for the Child: The role of pediatric psychology for children with cleft lip and palate. *Plastic Surgical Nursing*, 38(3), 114-120. doi: 10.1097/PSN.0000000000000232
4. **Zulauf, C.**, Zinsser, K., & Silver, H.C. (2018). Using Mixed-Methods to understand Preschool Expulsion. *SAGE Research Methods Cases*. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526477736>
5. McKowen, J., Isenberg, M. B., Carrellas, W. N., **Zulauf, C.**, Ward, E. N., Fried, R., & Wilens, T. (2018). Neuropsychological changes in patients with substance use disorder after completion of a one-month intensive outpatient treatment program. *The American Journal on Addictions*, 27(8), 632-638. doi: 10.1111/ajad.12824
6. **Zulauf, C.**, Sokolovsky, A., Grabell, A., & Olson, S. (2018). Early Risk Pathways to Physical versus Relational Peer Aggression: The interplay of externalizing behavior and harsh parental discipline varies by child sex. *Aggressive Behavior*, 44(2), 209-220. doi: 10.1002/ab.21744
7. Peters, A.T., Weinstein, S.M., Isaia, A., Van Meter, A., **Zulauf, C.**, Henry, D.B., & West, A.E. (2018). Symptom Dimensions and Trajectories of Functioning among Bipolar Youth: A Cluster Analysis. *Journal of Psychiatric Practice*, 24 (3), 146-157. doi: 10.1097/PRA.0000000000000307
8. McKowen, J., Carrellas, N., **Zulauf, C.**, Ward, N., Fried, R., & Wilens, T. (2017). Factors Associated with Attrition in Substance Using Patients Enrolled in an Intensive Outpatient Program. *American Journal on Addictions*, 26(8), 780-787. doi: 10.1111/ajad.12619
9. Wilens, T., Carrellas, N., **Zulauf, C.**, Yule, A., Uchida, M., Spencer, A., & Biederman, J. (2017). Pilot Data Supporting Omega-3 Fatty Acids Supplementation in Medicated Children with ADHD and Deficits in Emotional Self-Regulation. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology*, 27(8), 755-756. doi:10.1089/cap.2017.0080
10. Wilens, T.E., Biederman, J., Martelon, M., **Zulauf, C.**, Anderson, J., Carrellas, N., Yule, A., Wozniak, J., Fried, R., & Faraone, S.V. (2016). Further evidence for smoking and substance use disorders in youth with bipolar disorder and comorbid conduct disorder. *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 77(10), 1420-1427. doi:10.4088/JCP.14m09440
11. Wilens, T.E., **Zulauf, C.**, Martelon, M., Morrison, N., Simon, A., Carrellas, N., Yule, A., & Anselmo, R. (2016). Nonmedical stimulant use in college students: Association with Attention-deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and other disorders. *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 77(7):940-947. doi:10.4088/JCP.14m09559
12. Taylor, J.J., Grant, K. E., **Zulauf, C.**, Fowler, P.J., Meyerson, D.A., & Irsheid, S. (2016). Exposure to community violence and trajectories of internalizing and externalizing symptoms among low-income urban adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 1-15. doi:10.1080/15374416.2016.1152553
13. Pedrelli, P., Nyer, M., Yeung, A., **Zulauf, C.**, & Wilens, T. (2015). College students: Mental health

problems and treatment considerations. *Academic Psychiatry*, 1-9. doi: [10.1007/s40596-014-0205-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40596-014-0205-9)

14. **Zulauf, C.**, Sprich, S., Safren, S., & Wilens, T.E. (2014). The complicated relationship between ADHD and SUD. *Current Psychiatry Report*, 16(3), 436. doi: 10.1007/s11920-013-0436-6
15. Wilens, T. E., Yule, A., Martelon, M., **Zulauf, C.**, & Faraone, S. V. (2014). Parental history of substance use disorders (SUD) and SUD in offspring: A controlled family study of bipolar disorder. *The American Journal on Addictions*, 23(5), 440-446. doi: 10.1111/j.1521-0391.2014.12125.x
16. Wilens, T., **Zulauf, C.**, Ryland, D., Carrellas, N., & Catalina-Wellington, I. (2014). Prescription medication misuse among opioid dependent patients seeking inpatient detoxification. *The American Journal on Addictions*. doi: 10.1111/j.1521-0391.2014.12159.x.
17. Wilens, T.E., and **Zulauf, C.** (2012). ADHD, cigarettes, and substance use: Intoxicating combination. *Contemporary Pediatrics*, 29(11), 48-56.

Manuscripts Under Review

18. **Zulauf-McCurdy, C.** and Zinsser, K. (under review). Protecting against preschool expulsion: The association between a teacher's perception of the parent-teacher relationship and a child's risk for expulsion. Manuscript submitted for review to *Psychology in the Schools*.
19. **Zulauf-McCurdy, C.** and Zinsser, K. (under review). A qualitative examination of the parent-teacher relationship and preschool expulsion: Capturing the voices of caregivers. Manuscript submitted for review to *Journal of School Psychology*.

Manuscripts In Preparation

20. Silver, H.C., **Zulauf-McCurdy, C.**, & Zinsser, K. (in preparation). Implementation of Illinois' initiative to reduce preschool expulsion. Will be submitted for a special issue of *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*.
21. **Zulauf-McCurdy, C.**, Zinsser, K., & Roy, A. (in preparation). Classes of school-based peer aggression: Examining commonalities and differences by gender and time.
22. *Hussaini, Q., **Zulauf-McCurdy, C.**, Zinsser, K. (in preparation). Gender reference in the classroom and its relationship with classroom discipline.
23. **Zulauf-McCurdy, C.**, Zinsser, K., & Silver, H.C. (in preparation). Teachers' discussion of factors related to expulsion: Differences by child gender and race.
24. **Zulauf-McCurdy, C.**, Waasdrop, T., & Leff, S. (in preparation). Overt versus relational peer aggression: The importance of parental involvement.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS (Book Chapters & Evaluation Reports)

1. Zinsser, K.M., Silver, H.C., Hussaini, Q., & **Zulauf, C.A.** (2019). Evaluation Report of the Implementation of Illinois Public Act 100-0105: Early childhood programs' knowledge of and responses to the 2018 expulsion legislation. The University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.
2. **Zulauf, C.**, Jiang, X., Roth, A., Troxler, J., Zinsser, K.M., & Curby, T. (2016). Development and Preliminary Validation of the Emotional Teacher Rating Scale (EMOTERS) for Preschool Classrooms. *Advances in SEL Research, American Educational Research Association Special Interest Group on Social and Emotional Learning Newsletter*, 7(2), 6-7.
3. Wilens, T.E., **Zulauf, C.**, & Rosenbaum, J.R. (2015). Psychopathology and substance abuse in transitioning adolescents and young adults. In Stern T, Fava M, Wilens TE, Rosenbaum JF (eds). *Massachusetts General Hospital Comprehensive Clinical Psychiatry*, 2nd edition, (pp 755-763). Elsevier Health Sciences.

4. Wilens, T.E., and **Zulauf, C.** (2015). Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and substance use disorder. In *Adolescent Substance Use Disorders and Co-occurring Disorders*, Kaminer Y (ed). American Psychiatric Publishing, Virginia.
5. Wilens, T.E., and **Zulauf, C.** (2014). Substance use in youth with bipolar disorder. In *Ask the Experts: Mental Health in Adolescents: Bipolar Disorder*, Duffy A (ed). (pp 57-74). Future Science Group, London. doi: 10.2217/ebo.13.557

POPULAR MEDIA

- 2019 Supporting Teachers and Parents to Prevent Preschool Expulsion. *Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health Fall 2019 Newsletter*.
<https://iafimh.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/ILAHIM%20News%20Fall%202019.pdf>
- 2019 Are the High Number of Preschool Expulsion Related to Teachers' Perceptions of Parents? *School Rubric*. <https://www.schoolrubric.com/publications/articles/education-news/item/64-are-the-high-number-of-preschool-expulsions-related-to-teachers-perceptions-of-parents>
- 2019 Study: To reduce preschool expulsions, form stronger connections with parents. *Education Dive*. <https://www.educationdive.com/news/study-to-reduce-preschool-expulsions-form-stronger-connections-with-paren/551763/>
- 2019 Kicking kids out of preschool is damaging, experts say. So why is it still happening? *NBC News*. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/education/kicking-kids-out-preschool-damaging-experts-say-so-why-it-n1038706>
- 2018 Why Ending Expulsions From US Preschools Requires More than Passing Laws to Ban Them. *Scholar Strategy Network*. <https://scholars.org/contribution/why-ending-expulsions-us-preschools-requires-more-passing-laws-ban-them>

PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH

1. Silver, H.C., Zinsser, K.M., **Zulauf, C.**, & Hussaini, Q. (2020, June). A Longitudinal Mixed-Methods Study of the Implementation of Illinois Early Childhood Expulsion Legislation. Paper submitted to a symposium at the National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC) Annual Conference, Arlington, VA.
2. Zinsser, K.M., Silver, H.C., Hussaini, Q., & **Zulauf, C.** (2019, June). *Creating a Research, Practice, and Policy Coalition to Evaluate the Illinois Early Childhood Expulsion Legislation Implementation Process*. Paper presented to the Society for Community Research and Action Biennial Conference, Chicago, IL.
3. *Hussaini, Q., Silver, H.C., **Zulauf, C.**, & Zinsser, K.M. (2018, October). *Illinois Expulsion Legislation Implementation Process Evaluation*. Paper presented to the Midwest Ecological-Community Psychology Conference, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago IL.
4. **Zulauf, C.**, Nair Das, V., Silver, H.C., & Zinsser, K. (2018, April). *Utilizing social-emotional supports to address teacher stress and preschool expulsion*. Paper presented at the Midwestern Psychological Association annual meeting in Chicago, IL.
5. Wilens, T., McKowen, J., Carrellas, N., **Zulauf, C.**, Ward, E., & Fried, R. (2017, December). *Neuropsychological Factors Associated with Attrition in Substance Using Patients Enrolled in an Intensive Outpatient Program*. Paper presented at the 27th annual meeting of the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, Bonita Springs, FL.
6. **Zulauf, C.**, and Zinsser, K. (2017, November) *Chicago Area Teachers' Perceptions of*

- Parents: Possible Protective Factor for Preschool Expulsion.* Paper presented at the Illinois Education Research Conference, Naperville, IL.
7. **Zulauf, C.**, De Souza, S., Nair Das, V., & Zinsser, K. (2017, April). *Perceptions of Parents: Possible Protective Factor against Preschool Expulsion.* Paper presented at the Society for Research on Child Development Biannual Meeting, Austin TX.
 8. Zinsser, K. M., Nair Das, V., & **Zulauf, C.** (2017, April). *Preschool Expulsion Rates and Social-Emotional Learning Support across Neighborhood Contexts.* Paper presented at the American Education Research Association annual meeting, San Antonio, TX.
 9. Zinsser, K. M., Nair Das, V., **Zulauf, C.**, De Souza, S., Rico, S., Nguyen, K., & Weishaupt, L (2016, November). *Considering the context of preschool expulsion across diverse Chicago neighborhoods.* Paper presented at the Illinois Education Research Conference, Peoria, IL.
 10. **Zulauf, C.**, Zinsser, K., & Roy, A. (2016, April). *Profiles of School-based Peer Aggression: A Person-Centered Approach.* Paper presented at the American Education Research Association annual meeting, Washington D.C.
 11. Gruber, S., Gonenc, A., Sagar, K., Carrellas, N., **Zulauf, C.**, & Wilens, T. E. (2015, October). *A One Two Punch? Assessing the Impact of Co-Occurring Substance Use and Bipolar Disorder Using fMRI Techniques.* Paper presented at the 62nd annual meeting of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, San Antonio, TX.

Conference Posters

12. **Zulauf-McCurdy, C.** and Zinsser, K. (2020, May). *Protecting against preschool expulsion: The association between a teacher's perception of the parent-teacher relationship and a child's risk for expulsion.* Poster submitted to the Association for Psychological Science, Chicago, IL.
13. *Hussaini, Q., **Zulauf, C.**, Silver C.H., & Zinsser, K.M. (2019, June). *Understanding the Multiple Sources of Gender Bias in Early Childhood Expulsion.* Poster presented to the Society for Community Research and Action Biennial Conference, Chicago, IL.
14. Park, C.E., Hussaini, Q., Silver, H.C., **Zulauf, C.**, & Zinsser, K. (2019, June). *Illinois Expulsion Legislation Implementation.* Poster presented to the Society for Community Research and Action Biennial Conference, Chicago, IL.
15. **Zulauf, C.**, Hindt, L., & Drossos, T. (2019, April). *Family Functioning, Age, and Management of Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Adolescents.* Poster presented at the Society of Pediatric Psychology Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA.
16. Hindt, L., **Zulauf, C.**, Distel, L., & Drossos, T. (2019, April). *Family Income, Parent's Perceived Social Support, and Glycated Hemoglobin Levels among Children with Type 1 Diabetes.* Poster presented at the Society of Pediatric Psychology Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA.
17. **Zulauf, C.**, and Zinsser, K. (2019, March). *Overconfident or Unprepared? Teachers perceptions of new early childhood expulsion legislation.* Poster presented at a policy session at the Society for Research on Child Development Biannual Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland.
18. Zinsser, K.M. Silver, H.C., **Zulauf, C.**, & Nair Das, V. (2018, June). *Utilizing social-emotional supports to address teacher stress and preschool expulsion.* Poster presented as part of a symposium at the National Research Conference on Early Childhood, Washington, D.C.
19. **Zulauf, C.**, and Zinsser, K. (2018, April). *Teachers' perceptions of parents: Possible protective factor against preschool expulsion.* Poster presented at the Midwestern Psychologist Association Division 27: Society for Community Research and Action meeting annual meeting, Chicago, IL.
20. *Hussaini, Q., **Zulauf, C.**, & Zinsser, K. (2018, April). *Gender Reference in the Classroom and its relationship with Classroom Discipline.* Poster presented at the Midwestern Psychologist Association annual meeting, Chicago, IL. Poster presented to the Cross-Program Conference at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.
21. Wilens, T. Carrellas, N., **Zulauf, C.**, Yule, A., Uchida, M., Spencer, A., & Biederman, J. (2017,

- October). *A Case Series of Omega-3 Fatty Acids Supplementation in Medicated Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Deficits in Emotional Self-Regulation*. Poster presented at the 64th annual meeting of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Washington, DC.
22. *Kingra, R., Christensen, C., **Zulauf, C.**, Denham, S.A., Bassett, H.H., & Zinsser, K.M. (2017, April). *Translating Research Tools into Classroom Assessments of SEL: Do Parents and Teachers Respond Similarly?* Poster presented at the Society for Research on Child Development Biannual Meeting, Austin, TX.
 23. **Zulauf, C.**, Sokolovsky, A., Grabell, A., & Olson, S. (2016, October). *Preschool Precursors of Children's Peer Aggression during the Late School-Age Years*. Poster presented at the 50th annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, New York, NY.
 24. **Zulauf, C.**, Sokolovsky, A., Grabell, A., & Olson, S. (2016, October). *Pathways to Aggression: The Differential Impact of Harsh Parental Discipline and Externalizing Problems in Boys and Girls*. Poster presented at the 63rd annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, New York, NY.
 25. Wilens, T., Carrellas, N., Martelon, M., **Zulauf, C.**, Morrison, N., Simon, A., Yule, A., Fried, R., & Anselmo, R. (2016, October). *Neuropsychological Dysfunction in College Students Who Misuse Stimulants*. Poster presented at the 63rd annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, New York, NY.
 26. McKowen, J., Carrellas, N., **Zulauf, C.**, Ward, N., Fried, R., & Wilens, T.E. (2016, December). *Neuropsychological Factors Associated with Attrition in Substance Using Patients Enrolled in an Intensive Outpatient Program*. Poster presented at the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, Annual Meeting, Bonita Springs, FL.
 27. Zinsser, K.M., Nair Das, V., **Zulauf, C.**, De Souza, S., Rico, S., Nguyen, K., & Weishaup, L (2016, April). *Preliminary Findings from a Study of Preschool Expulsion in Chicago*. Poster presented at the American Education Research Association annual meeting, Washington, DC.
 28. Gruber, S., Cognitive and Clinical Neuroimaging Core, McLean Hospital, Belmont, MA, Gonenc, A., Sagar, K., Carrellas, N., **Zulauf, C.**, & Wilens, T. (2015, October). *A One-Two Punch? Assessing the Impact of Co-Occurring Substance Use and Bipolar Disorder Using fMRI Techniques*. Poster presented at the 62nd annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, San Antonio, TX.
 29. Wilens, T., **Zulauf, C.**, & Martelon, M. (2015, December). *Substance and Nicotine Use in Young Adults with Bipolar Disorder: Initial Findings of a Controlled Longitudinal Study*. Poster presented at the 25th annual meeting of the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, Aventura, FL.
 30. Wilens, T., **Zulauf, C.**, & Martelon, M. (2015, December). *Characteristics of Young Adults Who Misuse Stimulant Medications*. Poster presented at the 25th annual meeting of the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, Aventura, FL.
 31. Wilens, T. E., **Zulauf, C.**, Ryland, D., Carrellas, N., & Catalina-Wellington, I. (2015, December). *Prescription Medication Misuse among Opioid Abusers*. Poster presented at the 25th annual meeting of the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, Aventura, FL.
 32. **Zulauf, C.**, Hart, L., & Bostic, J. (2014, October). *The Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project (MCPAP) Care Coordination Follow-up Model*. Poster presented at the 61st annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, San Diego, CA.
 33. Yule, A., Martelon, M., **Zulauf, C.**, & Wilens, T. (2013, October). *The Impact of Exposure to Parental Substance Use Disorders (SUD) on SUD Risk in Growing-up Boys and Girls*. Poster presented at the 60th annual meeting of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Walt Disney World, FL.
 34. **Zulauf, C.**, Wilens, T., & Martelon, M. (2013, March). *Substance and Nicotine Use in Young Adults with Bipolar Disorder: 5-year findings of a controlled longitudinal study*. Poster presented at the Harvard Myself Lecture Day, Boston, MA.

35. Wilens, T., Martelon, M., & **Zulauf, C.** (2012, December). *Substance and Nicotine Use in Young Adults with Bipolar Disorder: 5-year findings of a controlled longitudinal study*. Poster presented at the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry Conference, Tampa, FL.
36. Wilens, T., Martelon, M., **Zulauf, C.**, Yule, A., & Faraone, S. (2012, December). *Family History of Substance Use Disorders (SUD) and Offspring SUD: Results from a controlled family study*. Poster presented at the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry Conference, Tampa, FL.
37. **Zulauf, C.**, Burnside, A., Grabell, A., & Olson, S. (2011, June). *Examining the Relation Between Over-Regulation of Emotions and Externalizing and Internalizing Problems*. Poster presented at the 15th Annual Convention of the International Society for Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology, Chicago, IL.

*Undergraduate student research assistant or advisee.

INVITED TALKS

- Zulauf-McCurdy, C.** (2019, September). *An Examination of the Parent-teacher Relationship as Universal Protection against Preschool Expulsion*. Invited talk delivered to the Policy Lab at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.
- Zulauf, C.** (2019, August). *Teacher's Perceptions of their Relationship with Parents: Protection against preschool expulsion*. Invited talk delivered to the Behavioral Health Seminar at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.
- Zulauf, C.** (2019, May). *Youth and familial distress related to Type 1 Diabetes*. Invited talk delivered to the University of Chicago Endocrinology Grand Rounds.
- Zulauf, C.** (2017, October). *Teachers' Perceptions of Parents: Possible Protective Factor against Preschool Expulsion*. Invited talk delivered to The University of Illinois at Chicago Community and Prevention Research Brown Bag.
- Zulauf, C.** (2017, March). *Perceptions of Parents: Possible Protective Factor against Preschool Expulsion*. Talk delivered to the Cross-Program Conference at the University of Illinois at Chicago.
- Zulauf, C.** (2016, October). *Profiles of School-Based Peer Aggression: Stability over middle childhood and gender differences*. Talk delivered to the University of Illinois at Chicago Clinical Brown Bag.
- Zulauf, C.** (2015, August). *Being a Social-Emotional Teacher*. Invited professional development delivered at the Gurnee Park Districts, IL.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2019-present

Violence Prevention Initiative

Center for Injury Research and Prevention, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA

Principal Investigators: Stephen Leff, Ph.D., and Tracy Waasdrop, Ph.D.

Funding: NIH R01

LEND Fellow

2019-present

Pennsylvania Partnership for Children

Policy Lab, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA

Collaborator: Marsha Gerdes, Ph.D.

Funding: Pritzker Children's Initiative

2018-2019

Understanding Early Childhood Program’s Knowledge of and Responses to the “Expulsion Law”

Principal Investigator: Katherine Zinsser, Ph.D.

Funding: Society for Community Research and Action; American Psychological Association; UIC Office of Social Science Research

2016-2017

Development and Preliminary Validation of the Emotional Teacher Rating Scale (EMOTERS) for Preschool Classrooms

Department of Psychology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL

Principal Investigators: Katherine Zinsser, Ph.D., and Timothy Curby, Ph.D.

Funding: Institute of Education Sciences

2015-2017

Contexts of Discipline: Understanding How Social-Emotional Supports Impact Preschool Suspension and Expulsion Practices

Department of Psychology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL

Principal Investigator: Katherine Zinsser, Ph.D.

Funding: National Academy of Education and the Spencer Foundation

2015-2016

Early Investments Initiative

Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL

Principal Investigator: Rachel Gordon, Ph.D.

Funding: Institute of Government and Public Affairs

2015

**Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Chicago, IL**

Mentors: Roger Weissberg, Ph.D. and Jeremy Taylor, Ph.D.

Funding: McCormick Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, NOVO Foundation

2013-2014

Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program

Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA

Principal Investigator: Jeffrey Bostic, M.D.

Funding: Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

2012-2014

Etiologies of Stimulant Misuse in College Students

Pediatric Psychopharmacology Research Unit, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA

Principal Investigator: Timothy Wilens, M.D.

Funding: NIH K24 Award

2012-2014

Substance Abuse in Juvenile Bipolar Disorder

Pediatric Psychopharmacology Research Unit, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA

Principal Investigators: Timothy Wilens, M.D.

Funding: NIH R Award

2012-2014

Juvenile Bipolar Disorder and Substance Use: A Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study

Massachusetts General Hospital and McLean Hospital, Boston, MA

Principal Investigator: Timothy Wilens, M.D. and Stacy Gruber, M.D.

2012-2014

Neuropsychological Functioning in Patients with Substance Use Disorders Enrolled in an Intensive Outpatient Program

Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA

Principal Investigator: James McKowen, M.D.

2010-2012

Early Childhood Laboratory

Department of Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Mentor: Sheryl Olson, Ph.D.

Thesis project: "Preschool Precursors of Children's Peer Rejection during the Late School Age Years: The Roles of Early Aggressive Behavior and Harsh Parental Discipline"

2009-2010

Maternal Anxiety during the Childbearing Years

Department of Psychiatry, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Mentor: Maria Muzik, M.D.

CLINICAL PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

- 2019-2020 CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA Philadelphia, PA**
Clinical Psychology Intern
- Completed assessment, intervention, and consultation rotations.
 - Assessment Rotations: Autism Assessment and ADHD Psychosocial Assessment.
 - Intervention Rotations: Integrated Primary Care, Pediatric Epilepsy Program, Group Parent Training Program for ADHD (Center for Management of ADHD).
 - Consultation Rotations: Integrated Primary Care and Neonatal/Infant Intensive Care Unit.
- Internship Training Director: Stephen Soffer, Ph.D.
- 2018-2019 UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO Chicago, IL**
Pediatric Psychology Extern
- Completed intervention and consultation rotations, including Chicago Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disease Clinic of Comer Children's Hospital, Kovler Diabetes Center, and Outpatient psychiatry.
- Supervisor: Tina Drossos, Ph.D.
- 2017-2018 UI HEALTH CRANIOFACIAL CENTER Chicago, IL**
Clinical Extern
- Conducted consultation for children and adults with craniofacial conditions.
 - Provided ongoing outpatient (individual and family) psychotherapy and parent training to children and their families.
 - Performed neuropsychological and psychodiagnostic assessments to children with craniofacial conditions and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- Supervisor: Janine Rosenberg, Ph.D.

Introduction to Psychology (Psch 100); Research Methods (Psch 242); Developmental Psychology (Psch 320); Psychological Testing (Psch 340); Advanced Statistics (Psch 443)