SCENARIOS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ABOUT SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES OR SUSPECTED DELAYS

Activity Guide

Overview of activity:
This activity provides participants an opportunity to examine and discuss scenarios related to situations involving the four types of suspension and expulsion. This exercise will engage participants in considering and reflecting on situations in which children with disabilities or suspected delays have been suspended or expelled.

Directions:
1. Read your assigned scenario.
2. Next, in a small group or on your own, review the questions.
3. With your group, discuss the questions for the teacher to consider.
4. Finally determine what else might the teacher want to know and consider?
5. What can the teacher and program do that would help to keep the child engaged in the classroom and prevent suspension or expulsion?

Scenarios:
1. JOEY - In-School Suspension - Practices that involve removing or excluding the child from the classroom
2. ZOLA - Out-of-School Suspension – Practices that involve temporarily removing children from the program
3. TINA - Soft Expulsions - Practices that make it so the program is not a viable or welcoming care arrangement for the family and leaves the family with little choice but to withdraw their child
4. TYRELL - Expulsion - Permanent removal or dismissal from the program
Scenario 1: In-School Suspension

Joey is a four-year-old with a developmental disability. During circle time he avoids sitting with the group and when he does join, he quickly becomes restless. His fidgeting regularly disrupts the experience for other children and the teacher finds that she is constantly telling him to “settle down.” When the teacher feels his behaviors are too distracting, a volunteer is asked to walk Joey up and down the hall for the remainder of circle time.

Promoting Inclusion: Questions for Joey’s teacher to consider

- Think about the situation from Joey’s perspective. How do you think he is feeling during circle time and how might you address those feelings?
- Think about the situation from the parents or family perspective. What information has the family shared about Joey? Do they see this behavior outside of school?
- Which of Joey’s behaviors are directly associated with his disability and which are not?
- Does Joey have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan? Are there strategies in the plan to consider?
- Who else on our team can help you consider and implement strategies to support Joey? (ex: Mental Health Consultant Early Childhood Health Consultant, Health Services Coordinator or Coach)
- What can the teacher and program do that would help to keep the child engaged in the classroom and prevent suspension or expulsion?
- What implications does this scenario present for higher education instructors and researchers as well as policymakers? What would be some questions to consider researchers or new/updated policies to implement?
Scenario 2: Out-of-School Suspension

Zola is a three-year-old with Down syndrome enrolled in a full-day program. Her heart condition causes her to fatigue easily and sleep deeply during nap time. Typically, she doesn’t re-engage in afternoon play with other children. The program is concerned about Zola’s inability to fully engage in the afternoon and has asked her parents to pick her up after lunch until she “can make it through the whole day.”

Promoting Inclusion: Questions for Zola’s teacher to consider

- Think about the situation from Zola’s perspective. How might she be feeling in the afternoon and how might you address those feelings?
- Think about the situation from the parents or family perspective. What information has the family shared about Zola? Do they see this fatigue and lack of engagement in the afternoon outside of school?
- Which of Zola’s behaviors are directly associated with her disability and which are not?
- Does Zola have an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP), Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan? Are there strategies in the plan to consider?
- Who else on our team can help you consider and implement strategies to support Zola? (ex: Mental Health Consultant Early Childhood Health Consultant, Health Services Coordinator or Coach)
- What can the teacher and program do that would help to keep the child engaged in the classroom and prevent suspension or expulsion?
- What implications does this scenario present for higher education instructors and researchers as well as policymakers? What would be some questions to consider researchers or new/updated policies to implement?
Scenario 3: Soft Expulsion

Tina is a non-verbal four-year-old child with autism. During lunch and snack time, she becomes aggressive, pushing her teacher and others. Tina is strong and her actions often make the adult step backwards. Tina’s mom is called and asked to pick her up early when this happens. Having to frequently leave work to pick Tina up has caused a problem for Tina’s mom at her workplace and she ultimately decided to withdraw Tina from the program.

Promoting Inclusion: Questions for Joey’s teacher to consider

- Think about the situation from Tina’s perspective. How might she be feeling during lunch and how might you address those feelings?
- Think about the situation from the parents or family perspective. What information has the family shared about Tina? Do they see this behavior outside of school?
- Which of Tina’s behaviors are directly associated with her disability or suspected delay and which are not?
- Does Tina have an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP), Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan? Are there strategies in the plan to consider?
- Who else on our team can help you consider and implement strategies to support Tina? (ex: Mental Health Consultant Early Childhood Health Consultant, Health Services Coordinator or Coach)
- What can the teacher and program do that would help to keep the child engaged in the classroom and prevent suspension or expulsion?
- What implications does this scenario present for higher education instructors and researchers as well as policymakers? What would be some questions to consider researchers or new/updated policies to implement?
Expulsion

Tyrell is a five-year-old with a sensory integration disorder. He is particularly sensitive to loud noises. One day, the fire alarm went off while Tyrell was using the bathroom. Now, Tyrell soils his pants at least once most days because he doesn’t want to go into the bathroom anymore. Tyrell’s family was told he must be able to consistently use the bathroom if they want him to attend the program.

Promoting Inclusion: Questions for Joey’s teacher to consider

• Think about the situation from Tyrell’s perspective. How might he be feeling when he hears loud noises and how might you address those feelings?
• Think about the situation from the parents or family perspective. What information has the family shared about Tyrell? Do they see this behavior outside of school?
• Which of Tyrell’s behaviors are directly associated with his disability or suspected delay and which are not?
• Does Tyrell have an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP), Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan? Are there strategies in the plan to consider?
• Who else on our team can help you consider and implement strategies to support Tyrell? (ex: Mental Health Consultant Early Childhood Health Consultant, Health Services Coordinator or Coach)
• What can the teacher and program do that would help to keep the child engaged in the classroom and prevent suspension or expulsion?
• What implications does this scenario present for higher education instructors and researchers as well as policymakers? What would be some questions to consider researchers or new/updated policies to implement?