

# YALE MEDICAL NEWS

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS P. O. BOX 208279 NEW HAVEN, CT 06520-8279 PHONE 203 432-1345 FAX 203 432-1323

---

**CONTACT:** Karen N. Peart 203-432-1326 or [karen.peart@yale.edu](mailto:karen.peart@yale.edu)

**Embargoed for Release:** May 17, 2005 at 12:01 AM

## *Pre-K Students Expelled at More Than Three Times the Rate of K-12 Students*

**New Haven, Conn.** — Pre-K students are expelled at a rate more than three times that of children in grades K-12, according to a primary study by researchers at Yale on the rate of expulsion in prekindergarten programs serving three- and four-year-olds.

Led by Yale Child Study Center researcher Walter S. Gilliam, the study, titled “Pre-kindergartners Left Behind: Expulsion Rates in State Prekindergarten Systems,” is based on data gathered in the National Prekindergarten Study (NPS). The paper reports on expulsion rates by program setting (public school, Head Start, private providers), gender, and race/ethnicity. The pre-K report also presents expulsion data from all 40 states that fund prekindergarten programs.

The study found that although rates of expulsion vary widely among the 40 states funding prekindergarten, state expulsion rates for prekindergartners exceed those in K-12 classes in all but three states. Prekindergarten expulsion rates vary by classroom setting. Expulsion rates are lowest in classrooms located in public schools and Head Start, and highest in faith-affiliated centers, for-profit childcare and other community-based settings. In classrooms where the teacher had no access to a psychologist or psychiatrist, students were expelled about twice as frequently. The likelihood of expulsion decreases significantly with access to classroom-based behavioral consultants that provide teachers with assistance in behavior management.

“No one wants to hear about three- and four-year-olds being expelled from preschool, but it happens rather frequently,” said Gilliam. “Pre-K teachers need access to the support staff they need to help manage classroom behavior problems. Without this support, we are setting up for failure both our children and their teachers.”

The study found that four-year-olds were expelled at a rate about 1.5 times greater than three-year-olds. Boys were expelled at a rate over 4.5 times that of girls. African-Americans attending state-funded prekindergarten were about twice as likely to be expelled as Latino and Caucasian children, and over five times as likely to be expelled as Asian-American children.

“Classroom-based behavioral consultation appears to be a promising method for reducing prekindergarten expulsion,” said Gilliam. “When teachers reported having access to a behavioral consultant who was able to provide classroom-based strategies for dealing with challenging student behaviors, the likelihood of expulsion was nearly cut in half.”

**(more)**

The lowest rates of expulsion were reported by teachers who had an ongoing, regular relationship with a behavioral consultant. In classrooms where the teacher had no access to a behavioral consultant, students were expelled about twice as frequently.

The NPS, completed by Gilliam and Crista M. Marchesseault of the Yale Child Study Center, is a comprehensive data collection effort across each of the nation's 52 state-funded prekindergarten programs operating in the 40 states that fund prekindergarten. A random sample of 4,815 classrooms, or about 12 percent of the total, was selected. There was an 81 percent response to interviews with the lead teacher responsible for day-to-day operation of the sampled classroom. The NPS has an overall margin of error of less than two percent.

A policy brief that summarizes findings from the study was supported by the Foundation for Child Development, the A.L. Mailman Family Foundation, and the Schott Center for Public Education. The study, written by Walter S. Gilliam and Crista M. Marchesseault of the Edward Zigler Center for Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University, was funded by the A.L. Mailman Family Foundation. The NPS was funded by grants from the Foundation for Child Development and the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), with funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Further embargoed material for the study is available online at [www.fcd-us.org/news/embargoed](http://www.fcd-us.org/news/embargoed). Available materials include the full report, a policy brief and supplemental state pre-K expulsion fact sheets for the states funding prekindergarten. For further information, please contact Harold Leibovitz at 212-213-8337 ext. 203

###